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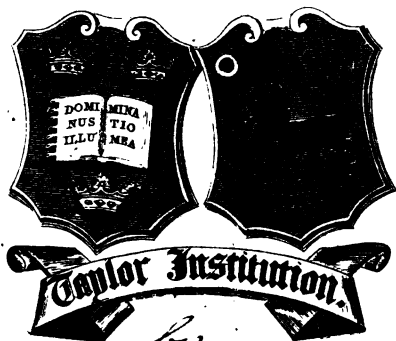
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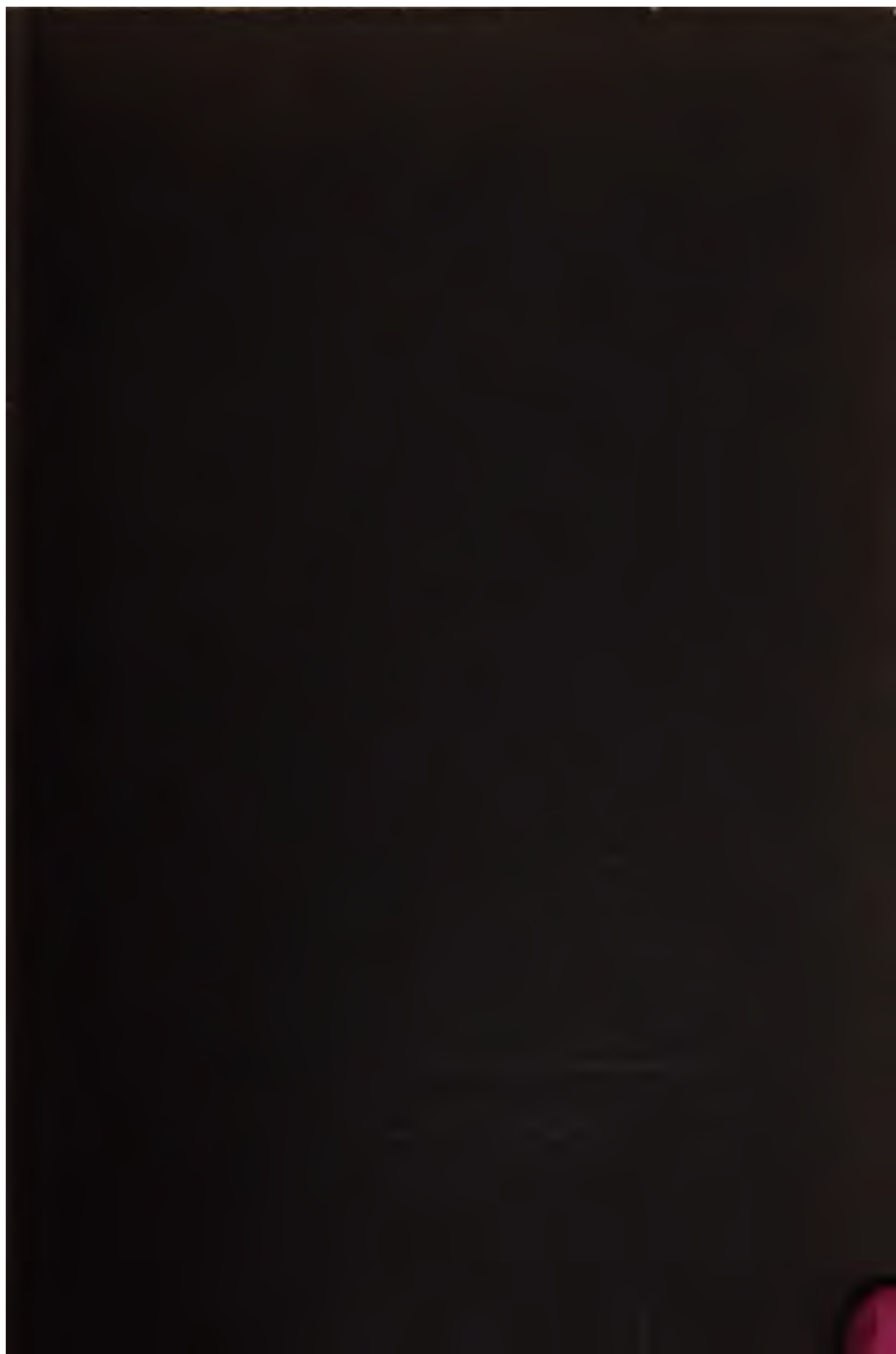
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XVII

OPUSCULES.

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XVII
OPUSCULES

BY

JUÁN DE VALDÉS.

Translated from the Spanish and Italian

AND EDITED BY

JOHN T. BETTS.

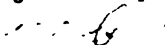
"Valdesio Hispanus scriptore superbiat orbis."

*From Daniel Rogers' Epigram in Lawrence
Humphrey's Life and Death of Bishop
Jewell, 1573.*

LONDON:
TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL.

1882.

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P R E F A C E.

THE Editor of this collection of extracts from Juan de Valdés' works, *hitherto unpublished in English*, has, in connection with Valdés' recently discovered tracts (never edited in any language until recently so in Spanish), to make his public acknowledgments of obligation to his highly valued and learned friend, Dr. Edward Boehmer, Emeritus Professor of Halle and Strasburg Universities, for his assistance and kindness, in furnishing him, the Editor, with the manuscript copies of the Spanish originals, so that he was enabled to translate them into English before they were published in Spanish as Valdés' *Trataditos*. This is true of the tracts numbered in the appended table of contents from v. to xi. The Editor feels it a pleasure to make these his grateful expressions public, for they are a well-earned but inadequately paid tribute to his master in these studies, whilst the circumstance gives an authority and value to these papers which they otherwise

would not have. Again, the Editor's recognition of obligation in that direction would be but half paid were he not to state, that it has been his privilege to translate them from Mrs. Boehmer's autograph; it is due to her, in commemoration of her desert in connection with those, who prize Valdés' works, to state, that the only German translation of Valdés' "CX. Divine Considerations" extant, is her able and faithful one.

Valdés' Introduction to his Commentary on the Psalms, here printed in English, has never previously been printed in any language; it was communicated to the Editor by his talented young friend, Don Manuel Carrasco, whose elder brother, the gifted and lamented Don Antonio, was drowned on his return from America, when the "Ville de Havre," on board of which he was a passenger, foundered. Don Manuel was invited by Dr. Boehmer to assist him in transcribing copies of the original Spanish Manuscripts, "sent by the liberality of the Austrian Government and by the favour of that of Germany from Vienna to Strasburg" for Dr. Boehmer to copy. Don Manuel transcribed this Introduction to Valdés' Commentary on the Psalms, and the Commentary itself on the first book of the Psalms—from Psalm i. to Psalm xli. Don Manuel is in possession of his own unpublished transcript of the original Spanish

manuscript both of the Commentary and of the Introduction. There is, indeed, evidence that Valdés expounded all the five books of the Psalms, but of them, however, there has been as yet but this one found.

The Trataditos were recently discovered among the thousands of anonymous manuscripts deposited in the Palatine Library at Vienna. Their discovery is greatly due to Michael Denis, who was appointed principal Librarian of the Imperial Library in the year 1791. He was a poet, scholar, and lover of books. His biographer says of Denis "that he did not rest satisfied with the mere guardianship of the literary treasures confided to him, but that he sought to make them known, and to show to youth and to scholars, how to turn them to account."

This observation is justified by the fact that Denis appended short initiatory extracts from the MSS. to each one of them ; judge of the task, when told that their titles catalogued, made 6000 folio columns. The extracts were intended to serve as a clue to recognition ; and in the instance of these, Dr. Boehmer's discoveries, here published, they did so ; for he, the great Valdesian scholar and author of our time, by these extracts at once recognised them, and brought them to the light by publication, after perhaps a necessary entombment

of 340 years, calculated from the date of Juan de Valdés' death, which was in 1541. An earlier discovery might by publication have ensured their fanatical destruction; but their gloomy wintry chrysalis period of existence terminated two years ago, and their resurrection has now commenced, in the latter decades of this enlightened century. This presumption is warranted by the experience realised in the instance of one of Valdés' works, his "CX. Divine Considerations," which are now to be found in Spanish, in Italian, in German, and in English, in all the university libraries of Europe and of America; but that work twenty-five years ago was so rare, as scarcely to be attainable by purchase. Its *editio princeps* was the Italian of 1550, for so well had the Inquisition suppressed and destroyed its Spanish original, that there was not a known Spanish copy of it extant, when that patriotic Christian scholar, Don Luis Usóz i Rio, turned it into Spanish from the Italian copy found by Dr. Boehmer in 1859 in the library of Franke's Orphan Schools at Halle. Don Luis published it in two editions, the latter being a trophy of scholarly luxury. Recently, however, amongst the collected papers of the Emperor Maximilian II. there have been found XXXIX. Spanish originals of thirty-nine of the CX. Divine Considerations, which, edited by Dr. Boehmer, have been published by Don Fer-

nando de Brunet, just prior to his lamented and recent decease, in the new work entitled Valdés' *Tratados*. Under Imperial protection Valdés' works have been safely preserved, but under any other the documents would have been destroyed and their possessor would have been compromised. In relation to the conservation of Valdés' works, and in connection with the Emperor, it should be told of Juan Perez de Pineda, who was Secretary to the Spanish embassy at Rome in 1527, when Rome was sacked by the Constable de Bourbon, that he subsequently published at Geneva in 1557, from Valdés' own MS., his Commentary upon St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, dedicating it with a long prefatory letter to the Emperor Maximilian II., which he presumably would not have done had he not been aware that such evangelical teaching was acceptable to the Emperor.

The recently discovered treasures in Vienna comprise the following :—

Valdés' *Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, the existence of which, prior to the discovery, was alike unknown to the late Benjamin B. Wiffen, who wrote the life of Valdés, and to all Valdés' modern biographers. It is already printed in Spanish at Madrid. Dr. Boehmer edited it ; and, now translated into English, it is actually in the press.

Valdés' *Spanish Version of the Psalms* from the Hebrew

"*El Salterio*," also edited by Dr. Boehmer, and published by Fernando de Brunet, with the *Trataditos*, at Bonn.

Valdés' *Commentary on the First Book of the Psalms*, from i. to xli., with a valuable introduction.

Thirty-nine of Valdés' *CX. Divine Considerations*, being the only known originals in Spanish.

Valdés' *Seven Doctrinal Letters*, which, with the thirty-nine Spanish Considerations, and the original Spanish version of the treatise on "*The Fundamentals of the Christian Religion*," have been edited by Dr. Boehmer, and published as the *Trataditos*.

This last-mentioned treatise had been found by Dr. Boehmer in Italian, with four others, in 1869, and were reprinted by him under the title of "Sul Principio della dottrina Cristiana. Cinque trattelli evangelici di Giovanni Valdesso, ristampati dall' edizione Romana del 1545."

The tract entitled the "*Christian's Conception of Christ*" is taken from the Editor's translation of the *CX. Divine Considerations*, to which Celio Secondo Curione prefixed a letter to the first edition of 1550, in which he says of their author, "No writer has soared to such a height, nor demonstrated so powerfully, nor reasoned so sweetly, nor with such majesty, nor with such authority, nor with such grace, as our Valdés."

PEMBURY, TUNBRIDGE WELLS,
November 1881.

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Juan de Valdés' Psalter.

HIS TRANSLATION OF THE PSALMS INTO SPANISH FROM
THE HEBREW OF THE FIRST FORTY-ONE PSALMS,
WHICH CONSTITUTE THE FIRST OF THE FIVE BOOKS
INTO WHICH THE JEWS DIVIDE THE PSALMS, WITH
HIS EXPOSITION AND COMMENTARY.

DEDICATORY LETTER,

*By way of Preface, addressed to the Most Illustrious
Lady Giulia Gonzaga.*

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS LADY,

Forasmuch as all men were originally created in the image and likeness of God, they naturally desire immortality and eternal life, they all understanding, some by report and by the Scriptures, and others by revelation and by divine inspiration, that the way to immortality and to life eternal is by the path of piety and righteousness. I mean that only they who are pious and righteous do attain immortality and life eternal, it being their aim and desire to be pious and righteous. But it comes to pass that they, who understand this by report and by the Scriptures, deceived by the judgment of human prudence, which, as St. Paul says,

“discerns not the things that are of the Spirit of God,” they think that piety and righteousness consist in living virtuously according to the precepts of human philosophy, and in supplementing with labours and with corporal exercises, and with other such-like things, that wherein they fall short in leading a moral life. Whence it is that, distrusting their ability to live virtuously, and unwilling to take the trouble to supplement that in which they fall short, some men resolve to disregard piety and righteousness, and in making this resolution they labour to persuade themselves that there is no God, that there is no immortality, and that there is no life eternal. These, losing by this resolution that wherein they are superior to other animals, bring themselves down to their level and become like them. From the deceit of human prudence it results, moreover, that others, labouring and wearying themselves in efforts to live virtuously, and striving to give satisfaction to God for that wherein they know that they fall short in living virtuously, without ever attaining the assurance that they have attained the piety or the righteousness that they aim at, live in continuous affliction and in terrible wretchedness of mind, ever in doubt as to that which they most desire, which is to attain immortality and eternal life. These, were it possible, would wish that there were no God and that there were no future life, just as the man who doubts his righteous-

ness would wish there should be no Judge nor sentence. And these, although they retain their superiority over the other animals, never succeed in regaining that image and likeness of God in which the first man was created, and thus they neither attain piety nor righteousness in the present life, nor will they attain immortality and life eternal, which they naturally desire and seek. It comes to pass, moreover, that the man, who understands by revelation and by divine inspiration that immortality and life eternal are attained by piety and righteousness, being guided and led by the Holy Spirit, which, as St. Paul says, "*searches all things, even the deep things of God,*" understands that piety consists in man's holding a good and right opinion of God, resting assured that all things proceed from Him; as also that He rules them all and governs them, and likewise in his bringing himself to be contented with all that God does, approving of it all as just, as holy, and as good; being convinced that in God are mercy, goodness, truth, faithfulness, and righteousness, and that God takes much greater care of every one of those who are intent on piety than does the kindest father of the most obedient child; and by the Holy Spirit they know that righteousness consists in man's renunciation and condemnation of all the righteousnesses that human prudence teaches, and in his holding to that

only which really and effectively was executed upon God's own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, embracing that, and holding it as certain and reliable, not entertaining the least doubt about it, that through that righteousness God holds him as righteous, just as though he had lived in the innocency with which Christ lived, and as though he had suffered in his person all that Christ suffered in obeying His Eternal and Heavenly Father. These, understanding this thus, follow the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and by it they come to attain true piety and true righteousness, and thus they come to be assured of their immortality and of life eternal, and therefore they live with great contentment and satisfaction of mind. These in the present life begin to regain the image and likeness of God in the mind, and in the other life they will fully recover it in the mind, and will likewise recover it in the body, being like to God in goodness, truth, faithfulness, and righteousness, and likewise in being impassible, incorruptible, and immortal. So that amongst all men, only those, who by revelation and by divine inspiration attain to know wherein piety and righteousness consist, come to be pious and righteous, and to attain what they desire, which is immortality and life eternal. Considering all this, and desiring, according to my feeble ability, to assist your Excellency in this your devotion to piety and to righteousness, and therewith also

certain other persons in whom I recognise this same devout spirit; and believing that the reading of the Psalms of David will greatly assist you to become truly pious, I have turned them into my vernacular, rendering the Hebrew text word for word as closely as the Spanish language will permit; and occasionally I have even allowed the Spanish tongue to speak incorrectly rather than vary from the Hebrew. This I have done, it appearing to me right and proper that things written by the Holy Spirit should be treated with great reverence. I have inserted some words of my own, in order that the text might be brighter, clearer, and more pleasing. These, that they may be recognised, are written in coloured ink, designing that they should get the credit that is due to man's word, establishing the difference there is between them and those of the Holy Spirit. True it is that the greater part of the words that are written in coloured ink are to be understood by implication in the Hebrew text. Now I would fain have your Excellency to know that what I have done in connection with the Psalms of David I wished previously to do with the Epistles of St. Paul, for just as I understand that the reading of David, when his divine thoughts and spiritual sentiments have been well considered and well understood, greatly help to put a man in the right road to true piety, which is through the knowledge of God, and

to increase it in him who has already entered upon it; so likewise the reading of St. Paul, when his divine thoughts and spiritual sentiments have been well considered and well understood, greatly help to put a man in the right road to true justification, which is through the knowledge of Christ, and to increase it in him who has already entered upon it; and I understand likewise, that as in order to know God it is first necessary to know Christ, so in order to enter into piety and to grow in it, one must first enter upon justification and grow in that. But my purpose has been restrained by the consideration that the Psalms stand more in need of a good translation than do the Epistles, for the former have been more inaccurately translated in Latin books than are the latter; so likewise piety being more natural to man than justification, I rest assured that a man, having been called and chosen of God, stifles ambition, self-esteem, and the pride of life, fully resolving within himself to do so, and thereupon he devotes himself to God and he devotes himself to Christ. Such an one will enjoy much more readily the thoughts and feelings of David than those of St. Paul, although, as I have stated, justification precedes piety, a man being first just before he is pious, because he knows Christ before he knows God. I indeed purpose, with the blessing of God, to do that with St. Paul which I have done with David, in order that

your Excellency may better compare the effects of piety with the effects of justification, and better by seeking them in your own mind than by reading about them in St. Paul, you will seek within yourself, that your mind may be adorned and dressed with the divine thoughts and spiritual sentiments which you will find in David and in St. Paul. And know that amongst *David's thoughts* I note the good and right opinion that David held of God, and of everything that proceeds from the Spirit of God; and the bad but fixed opinion that he held of man, and of everything that belongs to man; what he knew of the providence of God generally and particularly; of everything affecting those who, being in the kingdom of God, are ruled and governed by God, and what he knew of the goodness of God, of His mercy, of His generosity, of His truth, faithfulness, and righteousness; and what he knew of the wretchedness, vileness, and meanness of man, of his vanity, of his instability, falsehood, malignity, impiety, rebellion, iniquity, and depravity. And amongst *David's sentiments* I note his confidence in God, his poverty of spirit, his love and his fear of God, his prayer in the presence of God, his life in the presence of God, his consciousness of the presence of God, his eye realising the presence of God, and, finally, his dependence upon God; and I note this amongst David's

sentiments, that he challenges nothing as attainable from it all but that which is personally experienced. Amongst *St. Paul's thoughts* I note the good and right opinion which he held of Christ, recognising in Him consummate obedience to His Eternal Father, much love to man, much righteousness, truth, goodness, mercy, and pity, great suffering and great patience. And I note what he knew of the power and efficacy of the Holy Spirit, which is attained by believing in Christ. And amongst *St. Paul's sentiments* I note the call to the grace of the gospel, justification by faith, peace of conscience, the mortification of all that is flesh and human prudence by incorporation into the death of Christ, the government of the Holy Spirit, the assurance of resurrection, of glorification, and of life eternal; and I note this amongst the sentiments of St. Paul, that he challenges nothing as attainable from it all, but that which is personally felt and experienced; for I understand that Christianity does not consist in knowledge but in experience. Your Excellency will avail yourself of what has been already stated to understand my intention in the translation of these Psalms, and to know what is to be your aim to acquire by the reading of them, and what in the reading of St. Paul's Epistles. Of what I am now about to state your Excellency will avail yourself in order to understand some things which only affect the text of the Psalms.

Of the titles which the Psalms bear in the Hebrew books, I have only put the names either of the author, or of the singer, or of the person by whom it was composed, as, for instance, of David, of Asaph, of the sons of Corah, &c., leaving everything else ; for even the Jews themselves understand it, one in one way and another in another. Some persons weary themselves to discover whether they are all the Psalms of David, or whether some of them have not been composed by other persons, and who these persons were. Let us leave this curiosity to them, contenting ourselves with searching out in the Psalms those spiritual thoughts and affections which are in them, and let the curious go on seeking out and verifying who they were that composed them.

For the same reason that I omitted the titles I would fain have omitted that word “Selah” which is placed at the end of some verses ; and I have put it thus in Hebrew, for I believe it to be effective where it is. It will serve you as a mark that, when you meet with it, you should stop for a while to consider with what design it is placed there, without caring to know any further or other meaning in it.

As in the second verse of the third Psalm, where I understand that the word *Selah* reminds the reader of the disturbance that various thoughts wrought on the mind of a godly man in trouble, which, to divert him from piety, suggests to him that he

has no reason to expect help from God ; and likewise in the fourth verse of the same Psalm, where I understand that the same word reminds the reader of the satisfaction that the man feels when God answers him, granting him that which he had supplicated. And this appears to me to suffice in relation to this word.

Where the most holy name of God occurs in the Hebrew text, because it has but four letters in Hebrew, the Greeks call it tetragrammaton ; * and because the Hebrews hold it to be unlawful to utter it, they usually read *Adonai* (Lords) ; whilst the Greeks, following the Hebrew rendering, as I suppose from their inability to express the meaning of the most divine name, translate it *Κυριος* ; the Latins, who follow the Hebrew rendering and the Greek translation, translate it *Dominus*. I have translated it SEÑOR (LORD), writing it in capital letters, indicating that it is of great importance for the understanding of the Psalm to know where the tetragrammaton is. I have done the same with the *JA*, which is one and the same, for you have to know that the very being of God is almost expressed in this name, who is self-existent, and gives life to all things that exist and live, as is to be understood from the reply that God gave to Moses in Exodus iv. In some places, where it seemed good to me, I have left the word Jeho-

* The word of four letters.

vah as it can be written with our letters. But mark, that when you find LORD in capital letters, you have to recollect that this is the same name, for it greatly helps to the intelligence of the Psalm, as it will in that passage in Psalm cx. 1, "*The LORD said unto my Lord.*" Where you shall find Lord written in small letters, understand that in the Hebrew it is Adonai, which signifies Lord, master, or patron. For those Hebrew words, such as El, Elim, Elohim, which are ordinarily translated God, they are not only attributed to God, but are so likewise to angels, to kings, to princes, to judges, and to illustrious persons. Thus, in the fifth verse of the eighth Psalm, where by Elohim some understand angels, whilst others understand God; and as in the first verse of the 138th Psalm, where by Elim some understand God, whilst others understand illustrious personages; and as in the first verse of the fiftieth Psalm, where by El some understand God, whilst others understand strong, illustrious. In reference to those titles I have observed this rule, that where there was ambiguity, I have left the same Hebrew word, and where there was none, I have translated God. Accept this counsel: where you shall find the Hebrew word, you may attribute it, as I tell you the Hebrews attribute it, as shall seem to you most appropriate.

The Hebrews have three words by which they de-

signate man : Ish, Adam, Enosh. The first is almost ever attributed to valiant and noble men, which I have always rendered "varon," Anglice "baron;" and the second to common people—this I have translated "hombre," Anglice "man;" and the third to wretches—to characterise them I have taken away the aspirate and render it Hispanice "ombre," possibly Anglicised "the shadow of a man." Thus in the second verse of the forty-ninth Psalm, where by the children of "Ish" or baron are meant noblemen, and by the children of "Adam" or man are meant plebeians, which gives great perspicuity to the intelligence of the whole Psalm; and as in the fourth verse of the eighth Psalm, where I first put "ombre" (Ang. low), denoting the man's abjectness; and then I put "hijo de hombre," son of man, denoting him to be a common person. This suggestion is profitable for the comprehension of the Psalms, although this distinction be not always observed.

The Hebrews are in the habit of putting the future for the perfect, and the perfect for the future, and this occurs frequently. Often do they use the future of the indicative for the imperative; thus they say, Thou shalt love God, for love God. I state this in order that you may know that you can accommodate these tenses and these moods to that apprehension which shall appear best to harmonise with the whole Psalm. And observe that the Jews understand con-

tinuity as involved in their future tenses. In the sixth verse of the fifth Psalm, where it is stated that the Lord will abhor, it means, that He has abhorred, that He does abhor, and that He ever will abhor.

You will likewise observe that in Hebrew the singular is employed instead of the plural. Thus they write man instead of men, house instead of houses, the just man instead of just men, &c.

I would likewise have you know that the authorities quoted from the Psalms in the New Testament conform more to the Greek text (of the Septuagint) than to the Hebrew. I tell you this that you may not be astonished at finding disagreement between those quotations and these translations. And these monitions will serve you as to the text.

Having counselled your Excellency as to what concerns the understanding of the text, it remains that I counsel you as to the judgment that has to be exercised to get the spirit of it, so that you may read it as a Christian and not as a Jewess.

As to the first, you must recollect that the kingdom of David was a type of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; and bearing this in mind, you go on to verify in Christ what you read in David, having in some Psalms three things in view—the first, the person of David; the second, that of Christ; and the third, at times yourself, and at other times the Christian Church. Such will it be in Psalm ii., in

the xxii., and in the lxix., in which, more than in any others, you will find many things that correspond with Christ, whom, in this reading, you must ever keep in your mind's eye, without ever allowing it to be diverted from Him; and should it occasionally be so, it will be well for the moment to lay the reading aside, since your aim in it is but Christian and spiritual edification. Recall likewise to your memory that as when we read in the Holy Scriptures God talks with us, so when we pray we talk with God; and thus you will recollect that when you read these Psalms, God is talking with you; and that when you pray over these Psalms, you are talking with God.

And because there are in them many expressions of hatred to enemies, of desire of vengeance, and of vehement passions, with but little patience in suffering, and likewise other things that are apparently in little harmony with Christian spirit, you will recollect that they were written in the time of the Law, when the Spirit of God inspired vengeance, ere Jesus Christ our Lord had come into the world, who, in slaying His own most precious flesh on the cross, mortified the vehemence of passion and appetite in ours. And in order that that which you will here read, that prompts to vengeance and that prompts to vehement passion, may not awaken in you any vindictive or impatient feeling or want of patience,

ever remember that our days are not those of the Law, but of the Gospel, wherein the Holy Spirit inspires to pardon injuries, to suffer and to bear, in which, as I have stated, Christ in slaying His own flesh has already mortified that of those who, believing in Him, make themselves His members. The experience of this is recognisable in that there is just as much true mortification in a man as there is true faith,—I mean to say, that where there is faith there is mortification, and that where there are vehement passions and worldly and fleshly appetites there is no faith, so that vehemence denotes unbelief and infidelity, whilst mortification denotes faith and confidence. This proceeds from that the man being incorporated by faith into Christ and into the death of Christ—it is a marvellous thing—he dies also. In those who mortify themselves without faith, as soon as one passion dies another revives, and thus there is no perfect mortification in them, however much they may aim and strive after it. And know that mortification is imperfect death, as vivification and regeneration are imperfect resurrection.

Observe, too, that they who were David's enemies, preventing his assumption of the kingdom of Israel, obstructed the execution of the will of God, who had elected and anointed him to be king of Israel, whence they were likewise the enemies of God; and since David had the spirit of God, which, according to St.

Paul, "*searches out the deep things of God,*" he, it is clear, invoked against his enemies what he understood from the Spirit of God that God had determined to do with them. They who pray without the Spirit of God, pray for that which their own spirits desire and seek, for their own satisfaction. This very thing which you consider in David, you may consider in that the Hebrew nation in these Psalms prayed against their enemies; adding this, that if the Christian body increases being persecuted, triumphs being conquered, and is elevated in being depressed, the Hebrew nation, on the contrary, increased by persecuting, triumphed by conquering, and was elevated by depressing other nations. This consideration serves greatly for all the Psalms.

Should it appear to you that undue attention is made in these Psalms to outward happiness and griefs, to comfort and to discomfort, you should recollect that they were written at the period when external comfort and happiness were promised for the observance of the Law, and when external discomfort and misery were promised as chastisement for the transgression of the Law; and recollecting that you live in times when, through faith, justification, the kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit, resurrection, and life eternal, in which true happiness consists, are promised, you will only hold those to be unhappy who are outside the kingdom of God, being

without Christ, and them to be happy who are in the kingdom of God and evermore with Christ.

Refraining then from the imitation of David in those things which were peculiar to the spirit of the Law and are alien to the spirit of the gospel, you will weigh with great attention his numerous, most spiritual, and most divine affections and thoughts, which fully correspond with the spirit of the gospel. You will go on to compare the affections of David's mind with your own; nay, rather from those affections of David you will go on to discover and to understand your own, and from David's thoughts you will go on to form your own. With the Christian spirit, you will aim to get further; for proceeding to compare the pious affections which you will recognise in David with the affections of justification which you will recognise in the gospel, you will go on to develope yourself in them both. Finally, considering well those affections and those thoughts of this most divine king, you will go on to ask of God to impress such or more expanded ones on your mind, as becomes one who is a member of so perfect a Head as is the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, by whose grace, as well in the reading of this paper as in every other which you shall read, it will ever be your aim that faith, which consists in believing in God's words and in confiding in the promises of God, may be increased in your soul; that

hope, which consists in patiently waiting for the fulfilment of the promises, may increase; and that charity, which consists in loving that which is believed and that which is confided in, may increase: for that which is hoped for is resurrection, immortality, and eternal life, which your Excellency hopes to enjoy from God, not for your own sake, but by the goodness and mercy of God, who, to give His kingdom to His people, executed the rigour of His justice upon His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Juan de Valdés' Dedicatory Letter,

ADDRESSED TO GIULIA GONZAGA, AND PREFIXED TO HIS
SPANISH VERSION OF ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE
ROMANS AND THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORIN-
THIANS, TOGETHER WITH HIS COMMENTARIES UPON
THESE EPISTLES.¹



TO THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS LADY, SIGNORA DONNA
GIULIA DE GONZAGA.

BEING persuaded, most illustrious lady, that by the constant perusal of the Psalms of David, which I (having translated them from Hebrew into Spanish) sent you last year, you will have moulded within you, a mind as pious and as confiding in God, and as submissive to God in all things, as was that of David; and desirous that you, advancing still further, should mould within you a mind as perfect, as stable, and as constant in things pertaining to the gospel of Christ as was that of St. Paul, I now send you these Epistles of St. Paul, translated from the Greek into Spanish, by the continual reading of

¹ Valdés' Spanish versions and exposition of these two Epistles have been translated into English by John T. Betts.

which I am certain that you will greatly progress in spiritual edification, provided that you do not read, under the promptings of curiosity and of vanity, to acquire knowledge, as do ungodly men, who think to bring God under obligation by setting themselves to read St. Paul, just as Spaniards, who should speak Greek, might think of bringing a Greek emperor under obligation; but that you do read in order to mould and establish your mind as was moulded and established that of St. Paul.

I desire to caution you hereupon that you have so far to imitate David as you shall know that he imitates God, and that you have so far to imitate St. Paul as you shall know that he imitates Christ. This I say because it ought to be your aim to be very like Christ and very like God, striving to recover that image and likeness of God in conformity with which the first man was created. And I am not satisfied that you should think to regain this, having only David and St. Paul before you as models; because, at the best, that only would happen to you which occurs to the painter, who takes a likeness from a portrait painted by another; for he not only fails to attain to the truthfulness of nature, but he does not even come up to the perfection of the picture from which he copies it, or, if he do so, it is as by a miracle: and I say that I am not satisfied because I wish you to keep David and St. Paul as

models only so long as your mind is incapable of taking Christ and God for your models, ever aiming to perfect yourself in what concerns godliness and in what concerns the gospel in such manner that your mind becoming able to take Christ and God for models, you come to take your likeness from the life, from the image of Christ Himself, and from the image of God Himself; that your portrait may serve as a model to others, just as the portraits of David and of St. Paul now serve as models for you. And if this which I say appear to you to be something novel and never practised, know that it is nothing but what is ancient and that has been much practised, although from its not being understood it seems to be novel and never done. That this is the fact appears from what St. Paul says in writing to the Corinthians, where he tells them that they were yet carnal and not spiritual. He says to them, "Be ye imitators of me as I also am an imitator of Christ," meaning: imitate me so far as I imitate Christ. Here it must be understood that had the Corinthians been spiritual he would not have said to them, "Imitate me: take your likeness from that which I have taken from Christ," but he would have said to them as he says to the Ephesians, who were spiritual, "Be ye imitators of God, as dear children;" meaning, since you are children of God and most beloved of God, strive to recover the image and like-

ness of God, taking it not from any man, but from God Himself. Nay, it appears that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself had this same object in view, for He says in one place, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." He says in another, "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." You see that in counselling you that you should endeavour to get your likeness from the image of Christ Himself and from the image of God Himself, I tell you of nothing novel or unessayed, but of something old and already practised by Christ Himself and by His apostle St. Paul.

It remains that, commending yourself to God, you apply your mind to it. This you will do by imitating David so far as he imitates God, and that he is conformable with the image and likeness of God, having got his likeness from God Himself; and by imitating St. Paul so far as he imitates Christ, and conforms with the image and likeness of Christ, having got his likeness from Christ Himself: and do not stop here, but advancing still farther, consider that you have to imitate God, getting your likeness to the life from the image of Christ Himself and from the image of God Himself. And because the constant perusal of the histories [the Gospels] of Christ, narrating very many of Christ's works and very many of Christ's discourses, will greatly assist you to imitate Christ

and to get your likeness of Christ—for I understand that God displays much greater power in moving men's hearts by them, in mortifying them, and in quickening them, than by any other writings in existence—I purpose with God's favour to help you by them, as I have helped you by David and St. Paul.¹

And know assuredly that just as in the reading of St. Paul the wonderful effects of the Cross of Christ are known, seen, and felt, so in the reading of the histories of Christ the Cross of Christ itself is wonderfully known, seen, and felt.

Under this epithet CROSS I understand everything in Christ that savoured of weakness and infirmity, as well as in what He Himself felt in the endurance of hunger and of thirst, of cold and of heat, with all the other painful experiences to which these our bodies are subject, and in the suffering, affliction, and anguish on account of certain things that He beheld amongst men and in men, and in suffering intensely in death, as also in His outward appearance, on account of which He was held to be a man vile, low, and vulgar, and that He was treated as such, and as a man pernicious and scandalous, and that as such He was crucified.

¹ Valdès' Spanish version of Matthew's Gospel, and his commentary thereon, were published at Madrid in 1880, and translated into English in 1881 by John T. Betts.

I will fulfil this my promise in relation to the histories of Christ when it shall please and as it shall please the Divine Majesty; in the meanwhile you ought not to lose time. Aim daily to make yourself more like God by availing yourself of the perusal of David, and more like Christ by availing yourself of the perusal of St. Paul, in which you will also see the Cross of Christ, although not so clearly as in the Gospels.

And because the reading of St. Paul is commonly held to be more difficult than that of the Gospels, which are the histories of Christ, it may, peradventure, appear strange to you that I have given you St. Paul before the Gospels. I wish you to know that, according to my apprehension, there is, without doubt, greater difficulty in the perfect understanding of the Gospels than of the Epistles of St. Paul. This, I conceive, proceeds from various causes which would be long to enumerate here. I will only say this: that because I read in St. Paul the ideas and experiences of St. Paul, and in the Gospels the many ideas and many experiences of Christ, I find so much greater difficulty in the perfect understanding of the Gospels than in the perfect understanding of St. Paul, as I conceive that the ideas and experiences of Christ were more exalted and more divine than the ideas and experiences of St. Paul; not denying that, as to the general sense

and as to the style, the Gospels may be much more intelligible than St. Paul; although I reserve to myself the opportunity to speak more at large concerning this when it shall please God that I come to translate the Gospels.

In the translation I have sought to adhere to the letter of the text, rendering it word for word, as much as it was possible for me to do so; and even leaving ambiguity where, finding it in the Greek text, I have been able to leave it in the Spanish, when the text might apply in one sense or in another. I have done this because in translating St. Paul I have not pretended to write my own conceptions, but those of St. Paul. It is indeed true that I have added some [*palabras,*] little words, to the text, where it appeared to me that some of them are understood in the Greek text, although they are not written; whilst it seems that others are necessarily to be understood. All these are, as you will see, marked, in order that you may recognise them as mine, and that you may treat them as shall seem best to you as to the reading or not reading of them. But mark, that just as it is not well to make little account of what God may of Himself give you to understand in this reading, so neither is it well that you rely much upon your own judgment, despising the judgment of others. It is not well for you to undervalue your own, and it is wrong for you to undervalue that of others.

In the Commentaries that I have written upon what I have translated, I have kept as close to the mind of St. Paul as it has been possible for me, setting down his ideas and not mine; and if I have departed from them anything, it has been through ignorance and not through wilfulness; and therefore I shall be glad and feel it a pleasure to be corrected and put right in that wherein I shall have failed, and more so in that which might awaken any scruple, however small, in any Christian mind. Because although my principal design in this writing has been, as you know, to satisfy your designs, yet whilst desiring to render them profitable to you, I desire at the same time to benefit all who shall read this writing, and not to offend the humblest of them in anything. This is what I principally protest, because I understand that the Son of God whilst He lived here below made this protest, which I, being a Christian, am obliged to imitate.

The Latin words which I place at the beginning of the Commentaries do not serve, as you might think, to assist you to understand the Latin by the Spanish, for they frequently disagree the one from the other, but rather think that they only serve to help you the more easily to understand which are the Latin words to which the Spanish correspond, for these, as I have said, conform to the Greek text and not to the Latin, because St. Paul wrote in Greek and not

in Latin ; and supposing, for instance, that you should wish to read St. Paul's text without any Commentaries, I wish to point out some things that will open up the way for your doing so with greater facility and that will render the apprehension of St. Paul's mind easy.

And thus I tell you that by the GOSPEL, St. Paul means the proclamation of the good news of the general pardon that is published throughout the world, affirming that God has pardoned all the sins of all the men in the world, executing the rigour of His justice for all of them upon Christ, who has proclaimed this general pardon to the world, and in whose name all they who publish it do proclaim it, in order that men moved by the authority of Christ, who is the Son of God, may give credit to the general pardon, and relying upon the Word of God, may hold themselves to be reconciled to God, and may desist from striving after other reconciliations. Where you must understand that God in this case has done and does with men like a prince, whose vassals having rebelled against him, and having on account of their rebellion fled from the kingdom, he grants them a general pardon, and he sends it to be proclaimed to them by his son, in order that they, through the son's authority, should credit the pardon, and thus reliant upon the prince's word, should come to the kingdom, desisting from every endeavour to procure the prince's pardon in any other way or by

any other means whatever. Where it is to be understood that they who believe Christ to be the Son of God, but who do not credit the general pardon which He published and publishes, they do not hold themselves to be reconciled to God, and they go about seeking other reconciliations, not confiding in that which Christ published, and which on Christ's part is published; they do just what the vassals of that prince would do, who, believing that he who publishes the general pardon is the prince's son, should not hold themselves to be pardoned, and should thus not return to the kingdom. And I understand, too, that neither will the prince to whom this should happen carry out his design; for he sent his son solely for the purpose that he, being recognised as son, should be believed in what he declared. Neither does it appear that God carries out His design as to them, who, recognising Christ to be the Son of God, but not relying upon what He proclaims to them upon God's part, do not hold themselves to be reconciled to God; His design only being carried out as to those, who, recognising Christ to be the Son of God, and relying upon what He proclaims to them upon the part of God, hold themselves to be reconciled to God, and therefore pious, just, and holy. It is indeed true that the knowledge which they have of Christ being the Son of God, who do not feel themselves to be reconciled to

God, cannot properly be called knowledge, it being more properly opinion than knowledge; because, had it been knowledge, it would have in them the effect it has in others, assuring them of their reconciliation to God, and giving them peace in their consciences.

Besides this, know that, by the **LETTER**, St. Paul means all that a man does, says, and thinks without being inspired by God thereunto; although they be things that other men may have said, done, and thought, being thereunto inspired; and that by the **SPIRIT**, he means all that man does, says, and thinks, being thereunto moved and inspired of God.

It was the **LETTER** in St. Peter, his separating himself when in Antioch from intercourse with the Gentiles, in order not to scandalise the Jews; and it was the **SPIRIT** in St. Paul, his rebuking Peter on account of it.

Know, moreover, that by **FAITH**, St. Paul means the credit that man gives to the general pardon which Christ has published, and which is published on the part of, and in the name of, Christ.

And that by **HOPE**, he means the patience and the endurance with which the believer hopes for the fulfilment of what he believes, without wearying himself in hoping, and without desisting from his pretension to that for which he hopes; and that by **CHARITY**, he means the hearty affection wherewith

the man who believes and who hopes, loves that which he believes and hopes for, loving God and Christ, of whom, and through whom, he has to obtain what he believes, what he hopes for, and what he loves; and loving, too, everything that is God's and that is Christ's.

Know, besides, that by the **RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD**, St. Paul means the perfection of God, precisely as when we wish to say of a man that he is perfect, we say that he is a just man, meaning that there is not anything in him that is not very good, and that, in point of fact, he is without defect.

That by the **GRACE OF GOD**, he means the favour that God does man in drawing him to accept the general pardon, and in upholding him and in enriching him with other inward favours, which are called *grace*, because God gives them graciously, without any regard to merits, solely because such is His will.

That by the **GIFT OF GOD**, his principal meaning is His having given us Christ, that the rigour of His justice having been executed upon Him, we may hold firm on the general pardon. And he particularly means the outward gifts of the Holy Spirit, which in St. Paul's time were abundantly communicated to believers.

That by **SIN**, he almost ever means the proneness and appetite for sin which lives in man through depravity, natural and acquired; and I say almost,

because that occasionally by sin he means the sacrifice for sin.

That by **THE OLD MAN**, he means man's state neither regenerated nor renewed by the Holy Spirit; whilst by **THE NEW MAN**, he means man already regenerated and renewed by the Holy Spirit.

And know, likewise, that by **THE FLESH**, by **THE CARNAL MAN**, by **THE BODY OF SIN**, and by **THE LAW IN THE MEMBERS**, he means the same as by **THE OLD MAN**, which is nature without the Holy Spirit.

And know that by **THE LAW OF GOD**, he means that which God gave the Jewish people by Moses, which at times he calls *the Law of Death*, because its office was to condemn, whilst at other times he calls it *the Law of Sin*, because it irritated in man the affections and lusts to sin.

That by **THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT**, he means faith.

By **CIRCUMCISION**, he means the Jews, and that by **UNCIRCUMCISION**, he means the Gentiles.

And know, lastly, that by **CHRISTIAN LIBERTY**, he means the decree, the condition, and the dignity, to which God brings the man that accepts the grace of the Gospel, who, in being regenerated and renewed and made a child of God, is free and exempt from the things to which other men are subject; forasmuch as he sustains himself in regeneration and in

renovation, and does not deprive himself of adoption, through which he is ruled and governed by the Spirit of God.

Of all this you may avail yourself as a guide wherewith to hit upon the sense of many things you will read in St. Paul. And because it might awaken surprise in you to see St. Paul, that, setting himself to reprehend vices in certain persons amongst those to whom he writes, and cautioning them against those vices of which they ought to beware, he specifies certain vices which are disgraceful even in men of the world, it appearing strange to you that it should be necessary to caution Christians against those vices, and that he should not touch upon the vices which are more inward, and which are, therefore, more pernicious; know this, that because in St. Paul's time there were some, who converted Christian liberty into carnal license, and addicted themselves to vices and to frauds, it was necessary that St. Paul should correct them peculiarly in that wherein they most sinned; so that it was also necessary at that time to remedy outward vices in Christians, because they did not hold them to be bad, nor were they personally ashamed of them, through the false persuasion of Christian liberty into which they fell, and through their having ceased to be influenced by worldly esteem; as it is necessary now to remedy inward vices in Christians, for that they, partly for

God's sake and partly for the world's sake, personally abstain from outward vices, allowing themselves, however, to be overcome by inward ones, partly because they do not know them to be vices, and partly because the world holds the absence of those vices to be a vice in itself.

You will find in St. Paul some things that you will not find in yourself, and you will find others that you will not understand, and others that will appear strange to you. It appears to me that you may let all those things pass, being unwilling to greatly fatigue yourself in attempting to understand them, since the design with which you set about to read St. Paul is not to understand all that St. Paul says, but to form your mind with what God shall give you to understand, to feel, and to relish in St. Paul.

I likewise counsel you, when you begin to read an Epistle, that you should not fail to read the argument which you will find prefixed to it, because it throws great light upon all the Epistle. But all these counsels are nothing, and one is worth much more than them all; it is this: that you ever, when taking St. Paul into your hands, commend yourself to God, supplicating of Him to send His Holy Spirit that He should be your guide in this reading, and that you seek to have Him, through the mediation of the only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

**Juan de Valdes' Preface to his Com-
mentary on the First Epistle to
the Corinthians.**

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TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

IT is peculiar to the profession of the Christian religion to promote our neighbour's piety and usefulness. And because it is our sincere desire to aid, by this our work, those who seek to be assisted by the knowledge of the truth and to persevere in fellowship with those who obey it, and who have set all their love and affection upon it, we have therefore endeavoured, as something calculated to promote this end, to present them the first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, with a concise, faithful and condensed exposition, such an one as has not hitherto been seen nor published. It is assuredly no less useful than necessary to every Christian. For it is assumed that but few are prepared as learned theologians to ascend the pulpit to preach to the people, whilst many—indeed, I say that all, who bear the Chris-

tian name—are bound to follow Christ and to be His disciples, which is brought about by the right understanding of His words. He that despises them, and is but little concerned to understand them, saying, “I am no preacher: I am no theologian,” shows himself thereby to be no Christian either, and that if he have aught of the Christian, it is merely the name and reputation. The man calling himself a Christian, who shall confess that he has not to follow Christ and to be His disciple in order to be saved, will also grant that Christ’s words do not affect him, and that it is immaterial whether he know or understand them or not. If all Christians be not bound to dispute in schools and to sustain theses in public, they all, however, are bound to be instructed, that they may know well what God requires of them, and be able to defend themselves against the works of the devil, and against those of all them, who are in league with him; since the Christian’s life is a perpetual warfare, in which he who conquers is crowned with glory, whilst he who is vanquished remains forever deprived of it. Christian theology was not written for those only who have graduated, and who publicly profess themselves to be theologians, but likewise for those who publicly profess themselves to be Christians, and have received baptism, which is the door by which they were admitted to become so. The Apostle St. Paul wrote not his letter to the

Romans, to the theologians, preachers, who were at Rome, but to all those at Rome who were Christians, and believed in Christ, through their having heard and received His gospel, in order that they all, with it, might receive legitimate and faithful instruction in that which the gospel designs, and that thus their life might be conformed with that of its Author, who brought it from heaven, and who commanded that it should be taught to men. Neither wrote he this Epistle to those at Corinth who were eminent in authority and learning above others, but to all the Christians who were at Corinth, to small and great, high and low, ignorant and wise. And if the Epistle belonged to all, forasmuch as it was addressed to all, so likewise did the understanding of it belong to all. For the apostles wrote not that they might not be understood, but that their writings being understood, men should get from them the fruit which God the Lord purposed, who commanded the apostles to write them and who inspired them to do so. And if these Epistles were sent to them of those days, and that they were so favoured because they were Christians and stood in need of counsel how to regulate themselves suitably in the service of God, and that it behoved them, and they did attain, to understand them; for the same reason, though it be granted that they have not been sent to those of the present time, it is likewise the duty of these latter to endeavour to

understand them, in order that by their means they may be helped in all Christian service and duty. For Christians of the present day profess no other faith, hold no other God, or other baptism, nor are they called to possess any other inheritance, nor any other bliss, than those of former days; nor do they combat with other enemies than those which they of that time encountered; and against these as being now older, and more dexterous and more experienced in fight, the Christian has much greater need of the defensive armour which the Christians of that period employed, which is the Word of God, known and understood; this is the two-edged sword with which the enemy is smitten, and the defensive armour and broad shield upon which are received the fiery darts he is wont to discharge. And since Christ is common to us all, and is the Redeemer of us all; whom we follow as our pattern and example, so likewise does it behove us all to understand His will, which is made known and declared to us by His Word, spoken by the mouth of His apostles, prophets, and evangelists, in order that we all may by this way constitute an entire body, and may live together in the bonds of peace and love, as the profession of our most holy and heavenly religion requires. The uses of this Epistle are both varied and great. From it is learned what ministers of the gospel should be; by what spirit they have to be animated and regulated,

that they may truly be that to which they are called, and correspond to their call; and what feeling should be cherished towards them. By it is shown with what readiness men desert Christian duty because they dislike evangelical doctrine, which is the doctrine of the Cross, whereby their inward lusts are mortified. It also teaches with what diversity of gifts the Church is edified and ruled—I mean the multitude of those who agree and concur in the doctrines of truth and in all therein inculcated. There are in it likewise rules and precedents for restoration to the obedience of truth, of those who have departed, or are about to depart, from the unity of the Church, by giving ear to false prophets. It contains an admirable, fully comprehensive, and most sound exposition of that article of our faith, the resurrection of the dead—a subject of the highest importance to every Christian. There are, besides these, innumerable other topics in this Epistle worthy of the apostolic spirit, pregnant with great consolation and edification, which are then enjoyed, when they are read and are understood, the Holy Spirit having been first invoked to that end; for it is He that gives understanding to the children, and opens to them the door of His Word, that they may extract the blessings and spiritual sustenance there is in it, by which they are upheld and maintained in the right way. In the meanwhile, friendly reader, in its perusal, especially, avoid curiosity and

strive thine utmost to be devout. Read with humility the words of humility, that the Spirit of grace may find room to dwell in thee, and that thou mayest thus come to be of those who are taught of God, who aim in everything to have their mind and life conformed with the truth, which He Himself reveals to them and discovers to them by His Word. In this manner thou wilt come to be no imaginative Christian, but a practical imitator of Christ, whose bliss thou wilt after this life for ever enjoy with Him in His kingdom.

Juan de Valdés' Introduction to the Gospels.

THE greatest testimony to Christian truth is this: that when man, in things that affect it, does not exert in any way either his prudence or his human wisdom, he succeeds, and when he does exert them, then he fails. I have learned this truth by personal experience in many things, and the latest instance in which I have seen it is this: that had I, when I purposed to edify you and to edify myself in relation to that which affects Christian faith and Christian life by means of the Holy Scriptures, followed the judgment of my prudence and human reason, I should in the first place have occupied myself with the Gospels, which are the histories of Christ, and I should have sent them to you; because this Scripture is commonly held to be easier of interpretation and comprehension than any other; then I should have occupied myself with the Epistles of St. Paul and of St. Peter, and I should have sent them to you, for that there is, so to

say, in them, the practice of Christian life with the confirmation of Christian faith; and afterwards I should have occupied myself with the Psalms, and I should have sent them to you, because they are commonly held to be a Scripture very difficult of interpretation and of comprehension. And had I done so, I should have greatly erred in relation both to yourself and to myself, for neither should I have succeeded either in translating, or in interpreting, the Gospels so well, not having passed through the Epistles; nor the Epistles, not having passed through the Psalms; neither would you have been so capable of reading the Gospels had you not been instructed in reading the Epistles; neither in the reading of the Epistles had you not been exercised in the reading of the Psalms.

For the Psalms being based upon the obligation of the human race according to the true understanding of the law of Moses; and the Epistles being based upon the obligation of Christian regeneration according to the true understanding of the gospel of Christ; and the Gospels being based upon Christian regeneration itself and upon the expression of the life and words of the Son of God Himself, Jesus Christ our Lord, there is no doubt but that for me to translate and to interpret, and for you to understand and to relish, it was most suitable to take first the Psalms; for it is a fact that we are more capable

of things affecting the obligation of the human race than of those which affect Christian regeneration, these latter being, as it were, contrary to our natural inclination, whilst those are peculiar to it; and then to take the Epistles before the Gospels, because it is likewise a fact that we are more capable of the conceptions and feelings which on Christian subjects the apostles of Christ had in relation to Christian regeneration, than of the conceptions and feelings which Christ Himself had on the same subject; for in relation to those of the apostles we can avail ourselves to a great extent of "*the book of consideration*,"¹ assisted by personal experience, as indeed we do; whilst in relation to those of Christ we can avail ourselves of that book but little, for although to us, who accept the grace of the gospel, Christ communicates His own Spirit; through our incapacity, it is not in such abundance that we are enabled thoroughly to comprehend by our own experience all the conceptions and feelings of Christ which we find written in the Gospels, and thus, although we succeed in some, we scarcely attain to do so in others.

So that I have great reason to say that we succeed when we do not regulate ourselves in Christian matter by the decision of prudence and human

¹ *Vide* Consideration LIV. page 367, of J. T. Betts' translation of Valdés' CX. Divine Considerations.

reason; and that we err when we do regulate ourselves by it; holding this to be the surest token of Christian truth, being certainly assured that were it not thus true, just the opposite would be experimentally realised. And because I desire that you should thoroughly comprehend the necessity which is laid upon the man, who devotes himself to the Holy Scriptures, not to follow the order which I should have followed had I been counselled by human prudence, but that which I have followed without looking at it or thinking about it, setting apart the Psalms, which, as I have stated, follow the obligation of the human race imposed by the law of Moses, and taking the Epistles and the Gospels, which, as I have stated, follow the obligation of Christian regeneration imposed by the gospel of Christ. I state that there is yet another thing from which it appears that the Christian ought first to attend to the reading of the Epistles before the reading of the Gospels, and it is this: that the reading of the Gospels ill understood is just as perilous to cause a man to pretend to be righteous, and thus to attain salvation and eternal life by his works, disregarding faith, as is the reading of the Epistles, ill understood, perilous in causing a man to pretend to be righteous, and thus to attain salvation and eternal life through faith, disregarding good works. Since it is a fact that unregenerate man is more inclined to

justify himself by his works, without his faith, than to think of justifying himself by his faith, without his works; and it being likewise a fact that the foundation of the Christian Church is Christian faith, acceptance of the grace of the gospel, and works are hence good in proportion as he who does them is well based in Christian faith; for since St. Paul says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God," it is clear that the difficulty into which a man may fall by careless reading of the Epistles is less than in the careless reading of the Gospels, since he more easily falls away from the Christian foundation by reading and misapprehending the Gospels than by reading and misapprehending the Epistles. And although I have no fear of your fall into either of these two difficulties, nevertheless it is right to put you upon your guard, that in reading the Epistles you be so based in Christian faith as not to disregard Christian works; and that in reading the Gospels you so strive after Christian life, Christian habits, and Christian works as not to forget Christian faith. And because it might be, that that should occur to you, which occurs to many, who make of the Gospels a law, and aim at self-justification by fulfilling the doctrine of Christ, and thus they never find peace in their consciences, because they never know that they are satisfied, for in fact they do not satisfy, I warn you that you have to avail yourself

of the doctrine of Christ as instruction in Christian life. For you have to know that just as a peasant who has been adopted by the Emperor as his son would have instruction propounded and given him, whereby he should learn how personally to regulate himself so as to acquire the habits of a child of the Emperor, living dutifully and decorously as the emperor's son, so you, from being a daughter of Adam, are selected for a daughter of God; the doctrine of Christ which is in the Gospels is propounded and given to you, that you may learn and know by it how you should regulate yourself so as to acquire the habits of a daughter of God, living as is the duty of a daughter of God, and observing the decorum of a daughter of God. Which decorum, although it is very well expressed in Christ's words, you will nevertheless learn much better by considering the works of Christ Himself. And in this I speak from personal experience, having experienced in myself that although those divine words of Christ, "*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart,*" are very effective in me, still the consideration of Christ's meekness and humility throughout his whole life, and especially in His passion and in His death, is beyond all comparison more effective. For I assure you that this consideration brings me down to this, that were it given me to select that which I should most desire, the meekness and humility of Christ or all the other

glorious things that were seen in Christ, all taken together, whilst He walked here among men, I would select the meekness and the humility that I see in Christ, so much do they appear to me annexed and, as it were, peculiar and natural to the Christian, in this state of passibility and mortality. And here it is opportune to give you this caution : that it is for you to aim at imitation of those things in Christ which affect meekness, humility, love, and obedience to God, striving to excel in meekness, in humility, in love, and in obedience as you shall know that Christ did ; never holding yourself to be perfect in any of these things until you recognise that in yourself which you shall recognise in Christ. I do not say what you do know, for know assuredly that what you do know, is very little compared with what you will know, when you shall have formed close intimacy with Christ, having well examined all His words and well considered all His works.

Besides this, it is well that you should know that all that Christ said and taught does not affect all persons nor all times. For it is so that many things (of those of which He spoke) were necessary in those times, and would be injurious in these ; such as the observance of Moses' law, to the observance of which Christ's command to the lepers, that they should offer for their cleansing that which had been commanded by the law of Moses, is addressed ; and

to the same purport are those words of Christ in Matt. xxiii. 2, "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat;" and those in Matt. v. 17, "I am not come to destroy the law but to fulfil it;" and because there are many things that Christ said that are not generally applicable to all persons; as, for instance, that which he said in Matt. xix. 21 to the Jewish youth, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast," or that which He said to the Scribes and Pharisees in John v. 39, "Search the Scriptures;" and when conversing with his disciples, in John xiv. 26, He said, "But the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things;" whence it appears that some words were addressed to Christ's disciples, whilst others were addressed to those who were in the school of Moses, or in a philosophical school, but who had not entered Christ's school.¹

¹ It is clear that Valdés when he religiously translated and interpreted Holy Scripture, and sent his translations and commentaries to a pious lady, did not in any way desire to intimate that it is beyond the competency of all Christians to search the sacred text. What he desires to enforce is, that the principal and essential thing consists in the participation of God's Spirit. "*For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God;*"—"The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11). With relation to the former passage of St. Paul, Valdés adds, they who set themselves to search out the mysteries of God without the Spirit of God, realise the experience of those who set themselves to admire the perfection of objects without the light of the sun.

See, too, what the same author says when commenting upon Christ's words: "*Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God*" (Matt. xxi.) Had they understood them, they would not have erred,

You will avail yourself of this caution both to know that you are not to think aught addressed to you, save that which Christ addressed to His disciples, and that you have this only to apply to yourself; and to understand, that you have only to apply to these times the things that square with Christian faith and with Christian life, passing lightly over everything else.

Now because Christ was wont to express and to set forth some of His conceptions by parables and similitudes, which cause those persons great difficulty who seek to make them square in everything with everything, I advise you never to think of doing so. I never have done so, and you would but lose your time; but rather occupy yourself in making each one square with the purpose that apparently Christ had in propounding it, and thus you will hit the mark. That Christ does not pretend in the parables that everything should square with everything appears

for it is most certain that they teach him who understands them every virtue. "*And he teaches in relation to the parable of the talents*" (Matt. xxv.), that to form in our minds a right opinion of God and of Christ, we ought to apply ourselves to read the Scriptures written by the Holy Spirit, which must be interpreted by the same Spirit with which they were written. Men who read the Holy Scriptures without the Christian spirit, seeing that almost all the piety of saints under the law was based upon fear, proceed to canonise fear.

The unique means then for avoiding every error is for the Christian always to search the Scriptures guided by the Holy Spirit, as well those of the Old Testament, to which Christ peculiarly referred, for that no part of the New had then been written, as also those which are contained in this latter.—EDUARD BOEHMER, Editor.

from some which He Himself set forth; and if He did not make everything to square with every other thing, it would be a great indiscretion on our part were we to seek to make everything to square with every other thing.

An apparent discordance between the Evangelists has offended, and does offend, many, both as to the order of the history and as to the train of Christ's arguments, and so likewise in some other things, and hence they go on, labouring away to harmonise them. This task I have never taken up, nor does it appear to me that you ought to do so. For you should know that although I do not condemn the pious curiosity of these persons, I hold the Christian simplicity of those to be better, who take from each of the Evangelists what they give, and content themselves with this. As to the fundamentals of the gospel of Christ and of the Christian Church—that Christ is the Messiah, that He is the Son of God, that He died on the Cross, that He rose again and that He lives—they all agree without the slightest discordance in the world. And this much I assure you as to myself—I think that I should have felt less satisfaction and that the Evangelists would have offended me more had they harmonised in everything, without any the least discrepancy, than finding them to be what I do find them, who are apparently discordant upon some things, as well because I rejoice

that my faith does not depend upon the Scriptures—nor is it based upon them, but it depends upon inspirations and experiences, and it is based upon them; just as was the faith of those Samaritans, who, after having seen Christ and heard Him speak, believing by inspiration and by experience, told the woman that they no longer believed because of her report, but from the experience which they had—as because I intelligently see that God's design in the Scriptures has been to give just so much light as may suffice to illumine those, who have inward inspirations, and not to give enough to enlighten human prudence, when men would fain understand Christian things, spiritual and divine, without inward inspirations. And thus I understand that the apparent discordance between the Evangelists is to those, who read with human prudence and natural light that which Christ's abjectness and humility were to those, who contemplated Him with the same prudence and the same light: Christ's abjectness and humility caused these to stumble and to fall beyond their power to rise, and to those the discordance that there is between the Evangelists makes them stumble and to fall beyond their power to rise. And thus it comes to pass that Christ is always and in every way the stone of stumbling and rock of offence, even as St. Peter stated it had been prophesied concerning Him. And observe that what I understand as to the apparent dis-

cordance between the Evangelists, I understand likewise as to the apparent discordance there is in some of the authorities of the law and of the prophets quoted in the Gospels.

In the miracles which Christ wrought, you will consider His love, and you will have to avail yourself of them to confirm your Christian faith, thinking thus: if Christ wrought temporal benefits upon those, who, trusting in Him, followed Him and commended themselves to Him—this not being His principal intention in coming into the world—how much better eternal benefits will He work on those, who, trusting in Him, shall follow after and commend themselves to Him?—such being His principal intention in coming into the world.

In the passion and death of Christ you will consider His obedience to God, and you will avail yourself of it in order to bring yourself daily more to cleave, both in little and much, to what you shall know to be the will of God; examining yourself as to whether you have adequate spirit to go through what Christ went through,—in the patience with which Christ bore and suffered the injuries and insults which were said and done to Him, without rendering evil for evil, without prejudicing any one: you will consider His admirable meekness, and you will avail yourself of it, in order to imitate it, and in order to know that you have attained to so much of

it, since you feel yourself to be incorporated into Christ.

And when you shall read what Christ says against the Scribes and Pharisees, reviling them, you will consider that those words issued from no carnal emotion, but from the impulse of the Spirit; and you will avail yourself of this consideration in order never to allow yourself to be transported by your carnal affection to speak ill even of those, whom you shall know to be Scribes and Pharisees, opposed to the Christian faith, to the grace of the gospel, and to Christian life; herein imitating Christ, holding ever the safer side, which is to be useful to all, without prejudicing any one.

In the submission wherewith Christ subjected Himself to men, even to the payment of tribute to them, being the Son of God, as though He had been mere man, you will consider His most profound humility; considering that it would have been great humility had He, being the Son of God, humbled Himself to be man, in the highest grade and in the greatest dignity which can be thought of or imagined amongst men, and that it was the greatest, in humbling Himself to be man of the lowest possible grade amongst men: and you will avail yourself of this consideration in order to love humility; and never to hold yourself to be humble until you know yourself to be inferior to every one upon earth,

and that you rejoice in being held to be such and in being treated as such.

If, in reading Christ's transfiguration, you shall ascend Tabor with Him to contemplate Him transfigured; and that there you would fain be transfigured with Him; then come down from Mount Tabor, and place yourself upon Mount Calvary, to contemplate Christ crucified; and if, being there, you should not feel as willing to be crucified with Christ, as you were on the other to be transfigured with Christ, know that you were drawn by your own self-love and not by the love of Christ, and that consequently you love yourself more than Christ. You will ever make this same test, when contemplating things that are glorious in Christ, if the wish shall come upon you to be in them like unto Christ.

If, in reading the authorities of the law and of the prophets which are quoted in these Holy Scriptures, the desire should ever come upon you to go on comparing and examining them, know that you are moved by curiosity, and leave it alone; for I have ever done so in relation to those, in which I did not find Christian edification in such comparison and examination.

If, reading in St. John Christ's divine generation, you should be led to desire to understand in what

manner the Son is begotten of the Father, and in what manner the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son; reflect upon your incapacity, and think that your temerity herein is no less than would be that of a worm, were it to seek to understand in what manner you were begotten in your mother's womb. You will think precisely thus, should the wish come upon you to know in what manner Christ was begotten in the womb of the most holy Virgin Mary.

When you shall read the rabid ferocity with which the rulers of the Jewish synagogue persecuted Christ—going the length of putting Him to a most cruel death, calling Him impious and inimical to God, He having come to make them friends of God and righteous, and to give them eternal life—you will reflect upon what incongruities men fall when they allow themselves to be blinded by their passions, and how little any men are to be trusted, however commanding their positions; and you will avail yourself of this consideration to keep your mind constantly free from all passion, and not to trust any man in Christian matters, spiritual and divine, however elevated and eminent he may be; lest that should hit you, “*Cursed is the man that trusteth in man;*” * being restrained by that which happened to the Jewish nation, who, trusting to those who were

* Jer. xvii. 5.

distinguished and eminent amongst them in religion, shouted loudly for Christ's crucifixion.

When you shall read of the unbelief and incredulity, of the ignorance and of the blindness, in which Christ's disciples were during all the time He was with them, you will reflect upon the manner in which the eternal Father treated His only-begotten Son, whilst He lived as man amongst men—depriving Him even of the satisfaction which it would have been to Him to see His disciples spiritual and Christian, as they were after His ascension; and you will avail yourself of this consideration to refrain from the pretension that God should show you the love that He has for you, in granting you even spiritual gratifications—to refrain from the pretension of His vouchsafing you power and courage wherewith to pass through the bodily and spiritual trials which shall present themselves to you in this present life.

And if in reading certain of Christ's utterances involving predestination, as in that of John x. 28, "*Nor shall any one pluck them out of My hand;*" should it occur to you to desire to understand how predestination can be compatible with freewill, and how it could be that Judas should be compelled to sell Christ and be condemned for doing so, I would remind you of what Christ said to St. Peter, because he would fain have known what did not concern him—"What is that to thee? follow thou Me" (John

xxi. 22). Finally, you shall avail yourself of these very words whenever you shall be assaulted by anything awakening curiosity in you, in matters not affecting you—as well those which shall spring from this devout reading, as those which shall daily occur to you. And rest assured that both in reading these Holy Scriptures, as likewise in dealing with all Christian things, spiritual and divine, simplicity greatly profits, whilst curiosity greatly damages; it ought to be extirpated from the minds of Christians, surrendering to the simplicity that is peculiar and natural to regeneration. And thus as it will be profitable to you to be warned against curiosity in those words, “*What is that to thee? follow thou Me,*” so likewise it will be profitable to you to be warned by other expressions of Christ like that, against other influences by which you will be combated. Thus, should you be combated by fear, or by despair, as well in things temporal as in things eternal, remember those words of Christ in Matthew xiv. 31, “*Wherefore didst thou doubt?*” and of that in Luke viii. 25, “*Where is your faith?*” If vindictively affected, remember those in Luke ix. 55, “*Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.*” If in relation to the possession of this world’s goods, in Luke xii. 14, “*Who made Me a judge over you?*”

And if in reading the Christian perfection particularly described in St. Matthew, in chapters v. vi. vii.,

it should present itself to you as so elevated that you should begin to despair of ever attaining to it, and might be tempted to desert it, remember those words of Christ (Mark ix. 23), "*All things are possible to him that believeth,*" and with them you will rest assured of this truth, that although he, who has not Christian faith finds it impossible to bring himself up to so high a perfection—for it is impossible for him to love God more than he loves himself, and to love his neighbour as he loves himself—yet to you, who have Christian faith it is possible ; because Christian faith has incorporated you into Christ, and incorporated into Him you can say with St. Paul, in Phil. iv. 13, "*I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me,*" and I can do that which Paul could. And thus you will go on committing to memory certain of Christ's utterances, wherewith to be put upon your guard how to repress every affection with which you shall be assaulted, being ever attent to comprehend that perfection in which you are comprehended, by incorporation into Christ. Incorporated into Christ, by acceptance of the grace of the gospel and by baptism, you are dead as to the world, whilst you are raised and live as to God ; your predicament being identical with Christ's ; for God does not look upon you as to what you are in yourself, but as to what you are in Christ.

Be it your aim to live as dead to the world and to

all that is in the world, passing through it as though you were really and effectively dead ; and to live as risen again unto God, so that, living in this present life as dead and risen again, you begin to live a life very similar to that which you have to live throughout eternity, after the general resurrection. And know that in proportion as your life shall be conformed to that, to that extent you may believe that you have better comprehended that perfection in which, incorporated into Christ, you are comprehended, being in all and everything very like to Christ. And when you would examine how much you have comprehended and attained of this perfection, you will consider how firm and constant you would find yourself, were you constrained to suffer for Christ's sake the ignominy and confusion, the torment and the grief, that Christ suffered for you ; for know that to this firmness and constancy you have to bring yourself—it being your aim, that when you appear at God's tribunal, you may do so with great firmness and constancy, because of your incorporation into Christ, and that you have no cause for shame and confusion for yourself personally.

It were well that all your exercises and all your studies, and more especially this of the doctrine and life of Christ, which you will read in these Scriptures, were directed to this end ; ever with prayer to God, that He may favour you and me, with His

divine grace, to such degree, that the peculiar image of His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord may be seen in us.

In this translation I have followed the Greek text, just as I did in the translation of the Epistles, distinguishing the words which it appeared to me to be proper to add to render the Scripture more intelligible. And in the interpretations and explanations which I have written above the text, I have followed that which has appeared to me to be most conformable to what I feel and know of the truth of Christian faith and of the purity of Christian life; specially noting the spiritual edification, which, it occurred to me whilst writing, Christians, devoted to Christian life, might get from these Holy Scriptures, by imitating Christ; also ingenuously confessing my ignorance upon subjects, which through incapacity, or want of wit, I have been unable to fathom; it being my aim that the glory of Christ should thus be illustrated, as well by that which I have not understood, as by that which I have understood; and that thus Christians should be edified by the one as by the other—considering in the one what I am of myself, and considering in the other what I am by God's beneficence and favour—who drew me to Christ and incorporated me into Christ—and by Christ's munificence, who communicates to me what part He pleases of those divine treasures which His eternal Father has laid up

in Him, in order that He should communicate them to us who are incorporated into Him, in order that it may be seen and known in us and by us whom God is, and whom the Son of God Jesus Christ our Lord is. To whom, with the Holy Spirit, be glory everlasting. Amen.

Seven Doctrinal Letters.

I.

IN WHAT THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD CONSISTS, AND THE WAY BY WHICH TO COME TO THE PERFECT KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

HAVING experimentally learnt that so much of the truth of our Christian religion is understood, as is known by revelation and inward inspiration, this day's letter shall be in a more softened tone, and thus you will go on in the hope of clearing up obscurities in Christian truth, more by inward inspiration, than from aught that I, or any man upon earth, may report; availing yourself of the Scriptures, as well for the occupation of your mind, as for a sort of master, to put you in the way; and with time you will use the Scriptures, which are from men in whom the Holy Spirit of God dwelt, to compare and to investigate with them, what God shall inwardly teach you.

As to what you desire to know, as to the mode in which I understand God to have created man in His

image and likeness, I say that I understand God to have created the first man far excelling all the other animals; to have endowed him with all those perfections that are natural in God, as are justice, mercy, piety, goodness, wisdom, truth and faithfulness, with all the other perfections that Holy Scripture attributes to God; so that, all those perfections shining forth in the man, the image and likeness of God shone forth, so that Holy Scripture well saith that the first man had the image and likeness of God (Gen. i. 26), for he showed in himself the perfections of God, who had created him.

This image and likeness man lost through sin, for he lost all those perfections which made him like to God and through which the perfections of God shone forth in him.

This image and likeness was so pure and natural in Christ, that He could well say, "*He, who hath seen Me, hath seen the Father*" (John xiv. 9).

Christians recover so much of this image and likeness as they recover of righteousness, of mercy, of piety, of goodness, of wisdom, of truth, and of faithfulness; and so far as they recover these perfections, to that extent do they represent the image and likeness of God in themselves; just as when we see in a son the manners and habits which we recognise in his father, do we say that he peculiarly resembles his father. Having then learned what you desired about

this, now know that that which concerns you, is to keep the mind fixed upon the recovery of this image and likeness of God; and know, moreover, that you will recover it, by applying your mind to that which is very like to what you know in Jesus Christ our Lord.

As regards your statement, that I have taught you the certain and true way of knowing God, I say that the continuous reading of the Holy Scriptures, and the continuous contemplation of the creature, will put you in the way to attain this knowledge; but I tell you, too, that they will never bring you to Him, for this has been reserved for Christ. And thus it is that they, who accept the covenant that Christ established between God and man, are righteous: to them God shows His presence, and by them He allows Himself to be seen and known, and by no others, and for this reason Christ says, "*No one cometh unto the Father save by Me*" (John xiv. 6).

The manner in which God shows His presence, to those who are justified through Christ, it is impossible to express by words, and thus it is that only they understand it, who have seen, tasted, and felt it. I understand this knowledge of God to be that of which Isaiah speaks (lxiv. 4), which St. Paul quotes 1 Cor. ii. 9, "*as that which God has prepared for those that love Him.*"

Whence I consider that God calls us, that we

may know Christ, in order that we may accept His covenant, and having accepted it, may be righteous, and being righteous, that He may be able to show us His presence

And here I observe that we are not to rest contented with knowing Christ, nor with being righteous, but, going on, to desire to see the presence of God, and with continuous prayer to supplicate of God that He may show us it daily less veiled and more clearly, until that in the life eternal we may see Him face to face, even as He is. This ought to be our aim; in this we ought evermore to occupy ourselves.

And I understand that there is as great a difference in the knowledge of God gained from the report of the Holy Scriptures and from the consideration of the creature—from that which is obtained by justification through Christ, when God allows Himself to be seen and known—as there is between the knowledge that I had of the Emperor (Charles V.) from what I heard in discourse and from what I read in certain writings, from that which I subsequently had when I saw his portrait. But I understand that there is as much difference from the knowledge of God attainable in this present life, from that which is attained in the life eternal, as there is between the knowledge that I had of the Emperor, having seen

his portrait and that which I now have, after that I have seen him and have conversed with him.

Moreover, I understand that there is the same difference in the knowledge which they have of God, who know Him by contemplation of the creature and by the report of the Scriptures, from that which they have, who know Him because God Himself has allowed them to see and to know Him, as might hold between the knowledge we commonly have that all trees and plants are sustained by virtue of the earth, from that which we should have, were we really and effectively to see how the virtue of the earth ascends the tree, sustaining and maintaining it. This difference, only they can understand, who, having had the former knowledge, have also the latter.

This is what I at present understand as to the creation of man in the image and likeness of God, as also as to the knowledge of God; and because in other treatises that I have written to you upon this subject you will find differences from this, you will correct those by this, and I promise you that should God teach me aught further, I will conceal nothing from you that He in His mercy shall teach me.

In the meanwhile occupy yourself continuously in hearty prayer to God—“*Show me Thy face, let me hear Thy voice*” (Canticles ii. 14)—and strive to revive and to brighten up in you the image and likeness of God, adorning yourself with those perfections of

God—justice, mercy, piety, truth, goodness, wisdom, and faithfulness. This you will achieve with continuous prayer, and it will thus be certain that God will give it you through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II.

THREE WAYS BY WHICH MAN IS BROUGHT TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

YOU desire to know God, and you do well ; for from knowledge spring reverence and veneration, faith and confidence, obedience and love, and these constitute true religion. You desire that I should put you in the way to attain this knowledge. I likewise could wish to find some one that should do the same for me ; but, since you are content for the present to know and to understand what I know and understand, I say then that there are three ways by which we men may in this life attain unto such a knowledge of God as suffices for us to confide in Him, to obey Him, and to love Him.

The first is by the creature, the second by the Holy Scriptures, and the third by Christ.

The first, which is by the creature, would have

been fully sufficient for the perfect and true knowledge of God, had our understandings not been depraved and spoilt by Adam's sin, through which the image and likeness of God, in which we were created, having been effaced from our minds, there came upon us such darkness of the understanding, such depravity of the affections and habits, that from them our personal inclination is, to wish that there were no God, to be disinclined to recognise Him as our Lord, to be disinclined to confide in Him, to be disinclined to obey Him, and to be disinclined to love Him. But this depravity being to some extent repaired by faith, we are enabled by contemplation of the creature to come to know God's omnipotence, His providence, His wisdom, His goodness, and His generosity, whilst the exercise itself is pious, holy, useful, and profitable.

The second way of knowing God, by the Holy Scriptures, is clearer and more certain—with which God provided us by way of remedy for our depravity; and though all that is written in Holy Scripture serves us to this end, I shall touch here upon those passages of it which to my mind most open up the way. The first is in Exodus iii. 13, 14, where Moses, speaking to God, says, "*If this people ask me what is Thy name, what shall I say?*" God answered him, "*I am that I am,*" as though He should say, I am, who alone am, self-existent *through myself*, and I am

He, who give Being and life to all things that are and live; and afterwards He saith, "*Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, 'I am' hath sent me unto you*"—with which words, God, declaring the signification of His name, showed that His Being is included in His name. Now you, understanding that you have to recognise that the Being you have is from God, and that you hold it as long as it shall please God that you should hold it, and frequently occupying yourself, and very profoundly, with this knowledge, you will doubtless submit yourself to God, and you will humble yourself before His Divine Majesty; you will confide in Him, you will trust Him, you will obey Him, you will love Him, and you will adore Him; and withal you will go on to reinstate in your soul that image and likeness of God, conformably with which you were created.

The second thing in Scripture that brings us to the knowledge of God is to see that it is wont to call all Christians gods, and children of God, that hold any pre-eminence and authority over others, such as princes, governors, judges, as likewise those who repair and reinstate the image and likeness of God in their minds, by which we understand the omnipotence of God, His providence, His justice, His goodness, and His grace.

The third thing in Scripture that shows us the Being of God, is God's prohibition to the Jews to

make either statue or image of any kind that should represent the Being of God ; by which we understand the Being of God to be so incomprehensible that the ingenuity of man is inadequate to comprehend it ; how much more so is industry to mould it, or art to express it ?

The fourth thing is, that when God was pleased to show the glory of His divinity, He exhibited it in cloud ; this He did on Mount Sinai when He gave the law ; and at Solomon's temple when it was consecrated ; by which we understand that God is exalted above all things, and that He does not will that human pride be able to presume to form a conception of Him in its understanding.

Finally, David, in saying that God is able to do all that He wills, defines that which is peculiar to God, and that cannot pertain to any creature.

You see here what I have learnt of the knowledge of God in the Holy Scriptures.

The third way of knowing God is through Christ. This is the most perfect, the most certain, the clearest, and the truest ; this is by revelation, for Christ says so, in Luke x. 22 ; Matt. xi. 27—“ *No man knoweth who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.*” Were you to ask me, what shall I do, that Christ may reveal Himself to me ? as to the first, I shall say, that knowing indeed how necessary this knowledge is for you, and being

sure that you cannot attain it but through Christ, and trusting in the goodness of Christ and in His grace, go cast yourself at Christ's feet, supplicating Him, with great earnestness and with much perseverance, that He reveal this knowledge to you; and I counsel you not to desist from asking this, until you attain it. As to the second, I wish to place before you here what Christ says in respect to this knowledge of God that comes by revelation, in order that, led by Christ Himself, or by Christ's own words, you may the better hit on the way. From what we read in the gospel stories written by the Evangelists (Luke x. 17-20), Christ's apostles, after having preached the gospel in certain cities, returned much elated by the miracles which God had wrought by them, and this their elation Christ rebuked, when He told them, that that, of which they ought to be elated, was that their names were written in the book of life. This was precisely the moment when Christ, meditating upon this divine secret, turned to converse with His eternal Father, and said, "*I thank Thee, eternal Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these divine secrets from human prudence and wisdom, and that Thou hast revealed them unto those, who, in the eyes of the world, are vile and mean; even so, Father, for such has been Thy will.*" Having said this, speaking to us, He discovered a grand secret; saying, "*All things that My Father hath, has He*

delivered to Me ; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father ; and no man knoweth the Father save the Son ; and them, to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him." After this, without waiting that they should ask Him, What shall we do that Thou, Lord, mayest reveal Him unto us? He Himself teaches us, saying in Matt. xi. 28-30, "*Come unto Me all ye, who feel your blindness, who feel annoyed with your affections and lusts ; you are weary and afflicted, I will give you the rest you need.*" Moreover, He Himself teaches us the way by which we can and ought to go to Him ; saying, "*Take the yoke of My doctrine upon you, and learn from Me to be patient and lowly of heart, for this is the way by which you will find the rest and repose that you desire for your souls.*" And because human prudence holds the yoke of Christ's doctrine, the suffering and humility of Christ, to be hard, heavy and rude, I vouch it, that if indeed this my yoke at first sight be hard, and this my burden be heavy ; through love the yoke becomes within a few days pleasant to draw, and the burden very light to bear. So that, in order that Christ may reveal to you the true knowledge of God, you must needs come out of yourself and go to Christ, you must take upon you the yoke of Christ, and you must learn suffering and humility from Him ; I mean to say that you become patient and humble like Christ. Let this be the conclusion : exercise yourself in the

first knowledge of God, which is through the creature; and ever keep in mind the second, which is through the Scriptures; and impress upon your soul the third, which is "through Christ," taking Him wholly and very earnestly, and without a moment's delay. Acting thus, you will attain all you desire. God grant it, for Jesus Christ our Lord's sake. Amen.

III.

*THAT IT BEHOVES MAN TO REMIT HIMSELF TO
BE RULED AND GOVERNED BY GOD, AND THAT
WHILST HE USES THINGS FOR THE END FOR
WHICH GOD CREATED THEM, HE IS SUBJECT
TO THIS GOVERNMENT.*

WHEN God created man, He implanted in him prudence and reason, and He implanted in him affections and appetites, but He ordained that prudence and reason should be subject and obedient to the government and rule of God; as though a king should have put a sword in the hands of one of his people, and should have commanded him not to defend himself with it, having promised him that he would defend him: He, moreover, willed that the

affections and appetites should be subject and obedient to prudence and to reason.

Adam, the first man, unsheathed the sword of his prudence and of his reason, being discontented with the rule and government of God; and precisely at that moment the affections and appetites within him rebelled against prudence and reason, as when a feudatory discontinues his obedience to the lord of the feud, and then his vassals rebel against him.

God sent His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, into the world. He was ever ruled and governed by God Himself, and ever held His affections and appetites subject and obedient to His prudence and to His reason; and in His preaching He invited and invites men to (do) the same, and thus it is in that (passage) in Matthew iv. 17; Matthew x. 7 — “*The kingdom of heaven is at hand*”—“*appropinquavit regnum cœlorum.*” I understand Him to say, Put back your swords into their sheaths, do not use either your prudence or your reason, for God is now content to return to rule and govern you, as He ruled and governed the first man, Adam, whilst He remitted Himself to be ruled and governed; and as He rules and governs Me, for as a Son, I remit Myself to be ruled and governed.

For as, when prudence and reason in man rebelling against the government of God, the affections and

appetites in man rebelled against prudence and reason, so man turning to subject his prudence and his reason to the government of God, then the affections and appetites in man begin to return to the obedience of prudence and of reason. And thus I observe that all the doctrine of Christ, after that He had said, "*The kingdom of heaven is at hand,*" is directed to the reduction of the affections and appetites to obey prudence and reason. Whence I observe that the reason why men of the world find such difficulty in reducing their affections and appetites to obey prudence and reason, is because they have not reduced their prudence and their reason to the obedience of God; remitting themselves to be ruled and governed by God, as the first man, Adam, was ruled and governed at his outset; and as Jesus Christ our Lord was, up to His death, ruled and governed by God. So that in the same manner, if the feudatory desire that his vassals be obedient to him, he must needs return to obedience to the lord of the feud; so, if prudence and wisdom in man desire that the affections and appetites be obedient to him, they must needs turn to the obedience of God, and remit themselves to be ruled and governed by God. Do you desire to hold your affections and your appetites subject? Yield first obedience to God, replace in the scabbard your prudence and your reason, do not suffer

yourselves to be ruled or governed in anything by them, trust unreservedly in God's word, hold it to be sure and firm, and wait expectantly for inspirations from God. And do you wish me to give you a token by which you may know when you are moved by the government of God, or when you are moved by the government of your human prudence and of your reason, or by the revolt of your affections and appetites? Do this: In the first place, consider all created things, as well those within you, as those without you, and examine well to what end and to what intent God has created them. Considering well this, when you shall feel yourself moved to use a thing to the end for which God created it, think that you are moved by the government of God; and when you shall feel yourself moved to use another thing not according to the end for which God created it, rest assured that your prudence and your reason, or that your affections and your appetites, move you. This you will be able to have, as a book which shall be continually open before your eyes; and ever looking into it, and ever intently desiring that God may rule and govern you—subjecting your prudence and your reason, and that your affections and your appetites be subject to your prudence and to your reason—I am certain that you will feel greater spiritual progress than in the continuous reading of any other book you can

read. Read this attentively, and God will help you through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

IV.

ON THE PARTICULAR PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

That the teaching of human prudence in relation to God's providence makes men impious, and that the teaching of the Holy Spirit makes them pious.

I UNDERSTAND as a certainty that *that which principally sustains piety in man is a right apprehension of the providence of God*; and as I desire that you be sustained and increase in it, I wish briefly to show what it is that human prudence does apprehend of this providence, and what it is that the Holy Spirit teaches; I wish, by examination of the effects wrought in men by the one opinion and by the other, that you may know to which you ought to apply your mind in order to be sustained and to increase in piety.

As we understand from the books of philosophers and from the opinions of men in whom the Spirit of God does not dwell, human prudence, when it

desires to show itself pious, admits the providence of God in general, declining to admit it in particular.

As we understand from the books of Holy Scripture and from the opinions of men in whom the Holy Spirit does dwell, the Holy Spirit teaches the providence of God in general and in particular.

Human prudence avers that its opinion redounds to the greater glory of God, inasmuch as it makes those, who hold it, more pious; to it, it appears to be unworthy of the majesty and greatness of God that it should be mixed up in particulars so petty.

The Holy Spirit avers that its teaching redounds to the greater glory of God, inasmuch as it makes those who hold it more pious; the fact being that the majesty and greatness of God grows upon us so much the more as He manifests the greater care in our affairs.

Herein lies the difference of the opinions, in relation to which many apparently valid arguments might be adduced pro and con; but since it needs a miracle for any truth to be established or brought to light by words, let us leave words, and let us come to the investigation of this truth by the works—I mean to say, by the effects—which these opinions respectively operate upon those who hold them.

The men who follow the teachings of human prudence hold it to be ascertained truth that God does not hold account with them, and that neither

are they accountable to God; and not being accountable to God, they ever follow that to which they are led by their affections and appetites; and if occasionally they refrain from indulging in some, it is because they follow others, the impulses to which are stronger within them; whence it comes to pass that in adversity they are impatient, for they do not recognise God's will in it; whilst in prosperity they are insolent, because they recognise it as due to nothing beyond their commendable industry and their praiseworthy diligence.

The men, who follow the teachings of the Holy Spirit, hold it to be ascertained truth that God does enter into particular account with every one of them, and that they hold particular account with God; and holding this particular account with God, they ever follow the will of God, they depend upon God, they submit themselves to be ruled and governed by God; whence it arises that in adversity they are most patient, for they recognise the will of God in it; whilst in prosperity they are most humble, because they recognise it as due to the goodness and providence of God.

So that they who follow human prudence are impatient and insolent, and finally fall into impiety; whilst those who follow the Holy Spirit are most patient, most humble—they abide and are maintained in piety. Whence it may be fairly concluded from

the results, that since impiety is displeasing to God, whilst piety is pleasing (to Him), that the teaching of the Holy Spirit illustrates the majesty and greatness of God, whilst the teaching of human prudence obscures both the one and the other, in its followers.

Now that you have seen what effects these two teachings generally work, let us come to particulars, as affecting Christ's people, who approve of the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Amongst those who bear the name of Christians there are some devoted to philosophical books; who indeed with their lips approve the teaching of the Holy Spirit upon the providence of God, but in their hearts they only approve and follow the teaching of human prudence: now these for the greater part are all and altogether impious. There are others, who, devoted to Holy Scripture and to inward inspiration, have wholly renounced the teaching of human prudence; they approve and follow but the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and these are all and altogether pious. There are others, who, through their being well versed in the Holy Scriptures, approve and hold the teaching of the Holy Spirit to be good, yet, not divesting themselves of the teaching of human prudence, they in doubt go halting; and with these spring up diversities of superstitions, from these spring up multiformity of ceremonies, and from these spring up various rules and modes of life; because,

although, to the extent that they devote themselves to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, they confide in God, attributing a particular providence to Him; yet forasmuch as they hold the teaching of human prudence, living and entire, they do not wholly confide in the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and hence, not distrusting themselves, they continue to minister to themselves by their works, in a yea and nay fashion. These in adversity are on some occasions impatient, whilst at other times they are patient; and in prosperity, they are on some occasions insolent, whilst at other times they are humble. This infirmity of theirs is curable, when they know themselves to be sick; and I think because this infirmity is hard to detect, Holy Scripture holds it to be a terrible evil, saying (1 Kings xviii. 21), "*Why halteth he between two opinions?*" and saying in Rev. iii. 15-16, "*I would thou wert cold or hot; so then, because thou art lukewarm, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*"

You have already seen the bad plight in which they are who follow the teaching of human prudence, and the danger which they incur who do not divest their minds of this teaching; as also the happiness of those who, divested of all that human prudence desires and teaches, follow that which the Holy Spirit desires and teaches. It remains for you to make up your mind to divest yourself wholly of

all that savours of human prudence, in order that, thus divested, you may follow the teaching of the Holy Spirit, holding it to be sure and ascertained, that God holds especial and particular account with you, you remitting yourself wholly and altogether to His special and particular government, and thus inward piety will be preserved and increased in you, with which you will go into life eternal, borne by Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

V.

*THAT ONLY THE PIOUS FEEL TEMPTATIONS; TO
WHAT END THEY ARE TEMPTED; WITH
WHAT KINDS OF TEMPTATION; AND HOW
THEY SHOULD GOVERN THEMSELVES WHEN
IN THEM.*

It is indeed a holy and pious desire to wish to understand that which may be gathered from the Holy Scriptures in relation to temptations, the more so when this wish does not spring from a curious mind, but from one consistent and firm, ever anxious to maintain itself in the favour and grace of God;

considering that temptations operate either to detach us, or the more to attach and strengthen us. Now, lady, be attentive, for I am about to tell you what I have, up to this hour, been enabled to understand upon this subject. And in order that you may comprehend it the better, know first that temptation stands associated with uncertainty. I mean, that the tempter is uncertain as to the nature of the person whom he tempts, except in those temptations with which God tempts, as I shall state hereafter.

Know, moreover, that there are temptations with which we men tempt God, and that there are temptations with which God tempts men, and that there are temptations with which devils tempt men, and with which some men tempt other men, and with which men tempt themselves. Let us first understand whence it is thus, and afterwards we shall see to what end God tempts the pious, and what kinds of temptation He uses; and lastly, we shall see how we have to govern ourselves when under temptation.

We men tempt God when, distrusting His word and His promises, we murmur against Him, not holding it to be certain that He is true to His promises. And thus the Jewish nation frequently tempted God in the desert, and thus they tempt Him, who in their hearts are uncertain whether

God will fulfil what He promises them or not. They who are wholly impious do not tempt God, for in their minds they hold it to be certain and sure that God has not to fulfil that which He promises them, and when there is this certainty there is no temptation. Ahaz was impious when God commanded him that he should ask a sign with which to certify himself respecting that which God Himself had promised him, and he, pretending piety, said (Isa. vii. 12), "*I will not ask, and I will not tempt the Lord;*" and Joshua was pious when he commanded the sun to stand in the mid-heaven (Josh. x. 12). And in the New Testament Judas was impious when he hanged himself; and St. Peter was pious when at Christ's word he began to walk upon the sea. They who are lukewarm, being neither wholly free from impiety, nor wholly firm in piety, these are they who peculiarly tempt God. Such were the Jewish nation in the desert; the signs which they had seen prompted them to confidence, whilst human prudence prompted them to distrust; and thus, being in this perplexity, they tempted God. Just such another was he, who, in Mark ix. 24, said to Christ, "*Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.*" So that they, who are wholly impious, do not tempt God, because they are resolved not to believe; and they do not tempt God, who are wholly pious, for they are resolved to believe; but

they tempt God, who stand midway, irresolute as to the one or to the other.

God tempts men, not because He is uncertain as to what He holds to be in them, but in order that they may be certain of what they hold in Him, and in order that they may be certified as to what they are ; so that, although in the temptations with which God tempts us, there is no uncertainty upon the part of God, there is on our part. In these temptations the impious have no part ; they peculiarly belong to the pious and to those who walk piously. Amongst these I place the temptation of Abraham (Gen. xxii.), and I place the temptations with which Christ tempted His disciples.

The devils tempt men to sever them from piety, and therefore these temptations do not affect the impious ; for not having piety, they cannot be severed from it ; and they principally affect those, whose steps tend to piety, although at times they affect those, who are already pious. Whereupon I consider that devils act with men as does an army about to besiege a city, which marches into a country as though it were its own, for it encounters no resistance, and there it establishes and fortifies itself, whence its chief purpose is to attack the city, for it hopes to take it, and though it does not hope to take the fortress or citadel, nevertheless it does not cease to attempt it, irrespective of the issue, but its

main purpose is to take the country. In the same manner the devil comes amongst those, who are wholly impious, as into his own demesne, and there he establishes and fortifies himself, it being his purpose to ruin and conquer those who are not fully resolved, against whom he arms all his forces and directs all his temptations, not ceasing, however, occasionally to tempt those, who are wholly pious, successfully or unsuccessfully. With this design he frequently tempted Christ, not that he thought to conquer Him, but in order to try his fortune; and in this manner he tempts many who are really Christians, not that he thinks to conquer them, but to molest and to disquiet them. So that the devils do not tempt the impious, for they are already his own; they are not ordinarily wont to tempt the wholly pious, because they have lost all hope of conquering them; but they tempt the lukewarm, who do not wholly make up their minds to be pious.

Some men tempt other men, when the impious persecute the pious, when they injure them, and maltreat them. The impious are free from these temptations, for they, being the tempters, do not tempt themselves, since they know well that they are impious. At times the pious tempt each other: some do so in order to be certified of the piety of others, and others of that of others; and it ordinarily happens that the less pious tempt those

who are more so; this is because the less pious recognise with greater difficulty the piety of the more pious than the contrary. So that if the impious tempt the pious, it is to detach them from piety; and if the pious tempt each other, it is in order that they may know each other. And even at times a perfectly pious man tempts another imperfect one, in order that the imperfect one may know himself; and in this they imitate God, and they imitate Christ, as we have stated. Men tempt themselves when they desire to examine how strong or how weak they are in faith, and in hope, and in charity, and what progress they have made in the mortification of the inner man, and what in that of the outer man. And because the impious have no need of these trials, these temptations do not affect them which only affect the pious, and the imperfect more than the perfect. St. Paul told the Corinthians that they should with these temptations tempt (examine) themselves (2 Cor. xiii. 5).

You have already seen in what manner men tempt God, and in what manner God tempts men; and in what manner devils tempt men; and men each other; and a man himself; and you have understood how that the impious are excluded from all these temptations because they are impious; and that they all belong to the pious because they are pious. Now know and hold it to be certain that

all these temptations are God's works, and are for the benefit of the pious, who are tempted.

In this manner God permitted that the Hebrew nation should on various occasions be tempted in the desert, to have opportunity to show them His omnipotence, in order that the people might strengthen themselves in the faith and confidence which it was their duty to have in the promises of God. In this same manner God permits many pious men to tempt themselves by doubting His promises, in order that their doubts may make them more attentive when He fulfils to them that which He promises. In this manner a pious man may find himself in tribulation; he tempts God by not trusting that He will bring him out of tribulation. God brings him out, and then he knows much better his imperfection, and the truth that God keeps His promises. God tempted Abraham to strengthen him in the faith and confidence that he had in God, that God would fulfil that which He had promised him, so that temptation served to arouse the faith that Abraham had. Of the same nature were the temptations with which Christ tempted His disciples, and are the temptations with which the perfectly pious tempt those who are less perfectly pious. God consented that Satan should tempt Job, in order to strengthen in him the pious opinion which he held of the providence of God, and to show him

at its termination, that if God tempts the pious, or consents to their being tempted, it is for their welfare, and not to their prejudice; and likewise, in order that the pious who had to live after him might learn all this in his experience. He consented likewise that Satan should tempt His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; for He came to conquer, and He must needs be combated, in order that He should break Satan's forces, and that we should learn from Him, how we are to conquer Satan. And He consented, moreover, that Satan should tempt St. Paul, availing himself to that end of St. Paul's own flesh, in order that, feeling himself tempted, he might recognise himself man, and that he should not pride himself upon the lofty gifts which he had from God; and likewise, in order that when we, the pious, who live subsequently to St. Paul, shall feel ourselves tempted with similar temptations, we may recognise the will of God in them, and may control ourselves under them, as St. Paul controlled himself. God consented that Saul should persecute David, in order that David might know the need in which he stood of God, and in order that the pious of aftertimes might recognise in David, what God does for those, who maintain their piety: and God sent that Shimei to insult David, to exercise in him the virtue of patience, and to show to us, the pious, who live subsequently to him, how we have to

control ourselves, when we shall be insulted by ungodly men. God consented that the ungodly Jews should tempt His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, because it was right that the work of our redemption should be thus wrought out; for standing and persevering in obedience to God, He shows us how we have to stand sound and firm in obedience to God, not allowing ourselves to be conquered by the temptations of men of the world, who sometimes tempt us with caresses and at other times with threats; at one time promising us their good things, and at another threatening us with their bad ones. And in this category do I place the temptations with which God permitted the martyrs to be tempted by impious men, and which these same continually practise, tempting the pious. God inspires the pious that they should tempt one another, in order that they should know one another, and thus that some should avail themselves of and profit by the piety of others. God likewise inspires the pious to tempt themselves, in order that they may strengthen their faith, in order that they may daily mortify themselves the more, and every day quicken themselves the more. And for, this reason St. Paul counsels the Corinthians (*πειράζεσθε*) to tempt themselves (2 Cor. xiii. 5).

From all that has been stated you may clearly understand that God's design in all temptations is

the advantage of the person tempted, and that of the persons, who know or understand the temptation, provided that he or they persevere in piety. To such an extent is this truth, that even David's adultery and homicide redounded to the advantage of David himself, and of all who are pious. That it is true that it resulted to the advantage of David, he proves himself, saying in Psalm cxix. 71, "*It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me* (humiliasti me, in the Vulgate), *that I might learn Thy statutes;*" and that it results in advantage to the pious, I understand from what David himself states (Ps. li. 4), "*Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done evil in Thy sight, that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, be clear when Thou judgest,*" as I have expounded to you on other occasions.

God tempts us; He ordains and permits that we be tempted, according to the necessity, known to Him, for the pious person to be tempted, or for the pious, who have to be instructed by his temptation. Thus it was necessary that Abraham should have much faith, God having ordained that he should be the father of those who had to believe, and therefore he was tempted to have to kill his son Isaac, with whose life the fulfilment of the promises that had been made him stood associated. David had many motives to render him proud and insolent; God

tempted him with the insults of that Shimei to humble him and to exercise him in patience. St. Paul was rich in spiritual and divine gifts; in that spiritual affluence it was necessary for him to be reminded that he was human, and for this reason he was tempted with a thorn in the flesh. Satan thought, as all the impious, children of Satan, do think, that there is not a man upon earth, who, tempted in what they call worldly treasures and in bodily health, can remain unflinching and firm in piety; and to show him and them that they were deluded, God consented that Job should be tempted as he was tempted, and in the peculiar temptations God Himself so favoured him, that they did not detach him from piety. And not to discourse further either about the temptations of the Old Testament, or those of the New, I summarily state, that in the same manner in which God tempted Abraham, and David, and St. Paul, and Job, He tempts all the pious, called to the kingdom of heaven, predestinated to life eternal. And thus it is, if God sees a pious man inordinately attached to things of this life, He tempts him, taking them away from him, wholly or in part;—if He recognises that the man prides himself upon bodily advantages, he tries the man with disease;—if He recognises that the man values himself upon his spiritual gifts, or that he is about to do so, He

tries him with filthy and carnal sins ;—if He see one arrogantly presumptuous, He tempts him, allowing him to fall peculiarly into that, into which he presumed that he never would fall, as instanced in Solomon and in St. Peter ;—if He recognise one who is going on heedlessly as to the faith and credit to be placed in God's Word and in His promises, He tempts him by things which would apparently draw him into infidelity, in order that he may reflect and strengthen himself in faith, and may strengthen himself in confidence. So that when a pious man is tempted, if he will consider the character of the temptation, he will almost ever recognise in it some personal defect of his, for the remedy or restoration of which, that temptation comes on him, and thus in the peculiar temptation he will recognise and feel the grace and favour of God ; and thus, consenting not to the temptation, but to the will of God, which he recognises in the temptation, he will not be detached from piety by it, and in this manner the temptation will be an advantage to him.

We have already seen with what intent God tempts those who are pious, and the modes of temptation that He employs. Now let us, who are pious, see how we are to control and rule ourselves in our temptations, in order that we may derive advantage from them.

In the first place, let us fortify ourselves with this

truth, that all the temptations, which occur to us, come by the will of God, for our advantage, or for His glory; nay, both for the one and the other, it being so that these two things are ever combined; for there is no advantage to the pious that does not redound to the glory of God, nor is there anything that conduces to the glory of God that does not redound to the advantage of the pious. Fortified in this truth, we shall, therefore, think that everything that presents itself to us in this life of such a nature that, taking us when off our guard and unexpectedly, it is calculated to detach us from piety, that all such things are temptations. And thus it is that had Abraham not been forearmed with the certainty of God's omnipotence, and of the truth which He keeps in His promises, he would have hesitated about sacrificing his son Isaac, and thus, by disobeying God, he would have lost piety. In the same manner Job would have lost piety, if in his temptations he had not been forearmed with the certainty of the providence of God. This same would have happened to David when Shimei cursed him, if he had not considered the will of God in the maledictions; for he might have consented that they should slay him. Certified, therefore, that all the temptations, which occur to us, are by the will of God, and knowing what temptation is, we shall act in this manner. When temptation shall affect

us in things called the blessings of fortune, or in those called natural physical advantages, let us recognise the will of God, and let us labour to imitate Job; nay, let us outstrip Job, and if he is praised that under temptation he did not lose patience, let us so act that we may be praised for that we revel in self-possession, and are contented under similar temptations, and thus let us grow in faith and grow in piety. When temptations shall affect us in our honour, let us imitate David, in doing no injury to those who would strip us of it; nay, let us conquer David, and imitate Jesus Christ our Lord, in doing them good and in praying for them. When we shall find ourselves tempted with carnal vices, let us imitate St. Paul, first, by prayer to God to remove the temptation; if He shall remove it, we will give Him thanks for having given us it, and for having taken it away; and whilst we shall be in it we shall bear it with patience, recognising some other defect of ours, on account of which the temptation is sent; and let us be upon our guard, in order that, although it molest us and importune us, it may not in any way master us, and when unprepared, prostrate us: let us imitate David, who in a similar fall learned to know and humbled himself. Acting thus, neither will the temptations that are without the body make us lose patience, nor will those that are within

it, cause us to fail in our career. When temptations shall lead us to unbelief and distrust in God's promises, let us recognise that we are tempted as Christians; I mean, as more than men. Let us imitate Abraham, not setting about to examine God's promises with our human prudence or reason, but with Christian simplicity; then we shall believe that there is more truth in what God promises, then, when our prudence finds less to lay hold upon and less wherein to confide. And if in persevering the temptation should seek to persuade us that we are not of the number of those pious, to whom God's promises belong, let us here recognise the will of God, and let us rest assured, that we, who are thus tempted, need to be strengthened in faith; and certain of this, let us say thus: "All these are imaginations of mine. God is truthful in His promises; that which He promises to the pious concerns me, for I believe that He is truthful in what He promises; and since the promises are theirs who believe them, I believe them, and therefore they are mine; and it is for me to mortify myself in all my affections and appetites that are after the flesh and human prudence. Here I stand, and here I will stand, and herein I will persevere, without ever departing from it; and in this confidence I rest assured, for my Christ, in whom I believe, and whom I hold to be my Lord, promises me that it

is so. It remains that God will do with me and make of me that which shall please His Divine Majesty; for with that which He shall do I shall be contented, certain that it is for His own glory, which I, in all that is mine, aim at, and ever shall aim; for He will not fail me with His grace." With words like these, spoken from the heart and in the heart, we shall cast out and rid ourselves of all those imaginations with which our faith shall be disturbed and our confidence agitated, and we shall uphold ourselves in piety. And we will caution you not to entertain such imaginations familiarly that disquiet and disturb us, for, whilst we are disquieted and agitated we impede our mortification and our vivification, and in such case we lose by temptation. Now, it concerns us not only not to lose by it, but to gain much, since it is a fact that "*all things work together for good to those who love God*" (Rom. viii. 28). And when we shall have governed ourselves as children of God in our temptations, God will send His angels, I mean His secret inspirations, which shall comfort, cheer, and content us; for we read that He did so with His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now that we know what temptation is, and in what divers manners we the pious are tempted, and to what end God sends us the temptations, and how we ought to govern ourselves in them, it

remains that we avail ourselves of this which we do know, that we commend ourselves to God, and that, strengthened in faith, we evermore supplicate His favour and grace, ever living most carefully and solicitously to preserve ourselves in Christian piety, in which we stand through Jesus Christ our Lord.

VI.

*COUNSELS HOW NOT TO BE PAINFULLY AFFECTED
IN SICKNESS.*

YOUR sickness holds me in the greatest solicitude; for, as I am unable to see you, I do not know whether you *bear* it, as a child of this world, or as a child of God. Being in this uncertainty, although I greatly confide in your piety, I desire to relieve myself by this letter; recalling to your memory some things of which it appears to me you may stand in need now that you are in pain, and which, if you believe me, it will be well for you to revive in your memory frequently during the day; for, occupied about them, you will do two things: you will not

allow an imagination to present itself to your mind that is contrary to piety; and thus your body will not feel so acutely,—no, not even when the disease shall oppress the more.

The Apostle St. Peter counsels us how we should control ourselves under similar extremities. “*Being visited with calamities,*” he says, “*be not afraid, neither be troubled, but sanctify God in your hearts*” (1 Pet. iii. 14, 15). Let us see to it in the first place that you neither trouble nor terrify yourself; and afterwards we shall see how you have to sanctify God in your heart. Disease, in the extent to which it afflicts and torments the body, is without doubt an evil; but in this evil there is no reason why you should trouble or terrify yourself, it being certain that in proportion as the body fades, the mind will be the brighter; and since your concern is for the mind, and not for the body, there is no reason why the disease should disturb you.

Besides this, as I have on other occasions told you, God is wont to destroy and consume by disease that which is comely in the body of those who devote themselves to the soul, when He sees that they are elated by, or pride themselves upon, that comeliness, designing to remove that obstacle out of their way; therefore, if you have devoted yourself to your soul’s interests, God, who has recognised in you, some elation in respect of your beauty, purposes

by this disease to remove this obstacle out of your way, and you have no reason to be saddened on this account. Let the body fail, ache, grieve, disturb, and terrify itself; by how much the more it shall suffer with these passions, so much the more shall your spirit joy, rejoice, be content, and exult in itself, feeling the inward accomplishment of the will of God, and thus avenge itself upon the enemy, who frequently holds it perturbed and terrified and almost lifeless in its power. And recollect that God previously gave you piety, that He previously communicated His Spirit to you, that He previously planted you in Christ, before He gave you this sickness. Then, since such is the fact, think whether you are right in being disturbed by it, and still less in being terrified by it. Now, retain your self-possession, and God will restore you, with His grace and favour increased to you; so that neither this sickness nor any other shall disturb you. And if you act thus, I am sure that you will follow that part of St. Peter's counsel which says, "*when afflicted with evils, be not terrified.*"

Now in this illness which the body inflicts upon you, it will not content you that your mind be not disturbed or terrified, but it behoves you "*to sanctify God in your heart,*" in order to fully carry out St. Peter's counsel; know, as to the first, that we thus sanctify God, when we adore Him, give Him thanks,

praise Him, and confess that He is our God, and that omnipotence, benignity, goodness and mercy are His attributes. The Hebrews sanctified God with ceremonies and externals, sanctifying Him with the body, and sanctifying Him with the lips; but forasmuch as we Christians ought not to content ourselves with this mode of sanctification, St. Peter tells us to sanctify God in our hearts. It is very facile and easy to sanctify God with ceremonies and externals; but to sanctify Him with the heart is that which only they, who have the Spirit of God, can do. It is also facile and easy to sanctify God in prosperity; but to sanctify Him in adversity, in things that afflict and torment, and to sanctify Him in sickness and disease, this faculty is peculiar to them, who have the Spirit of Christ.

You, since you have the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, know in what manner God wills to be sanctified, and you know what concerns you in the mode of sanctification; it remains that you sanctify God in your sickness; and the moment when you most do so is when your sickness shall oppress, afflict, and torment you the most. And then you will sanctify Him, when you shall recognise this sickness as His beneficence, as your profit; for that it makes you the better to know how little you are, and are capable of, without Him; and likewise that He, who gave you being, is the same who

maintains and sustains you in it, and that without Him you would presently cease to exist. And hold it to be certain that when you shall ground and confirm yourself in this knowledge, you will recover from your sickness, for it will have wrought its effect. And I would not have you doubt about this—nay, I wish you to hold it as most certain. Think frequently of this, turning and revolving it over and over again in your memory; and when you shall have well imprinted it there, you will be able to say that you “*sanctify God in your heart.*” And because I know you to be self-willed (*voluntariosa*), I counsel you that, should you not immediately see the effect of this to be what I say, do not distrust yourself; for as the prophet saith, “*He that believeth, let him not make haste*” (Isa. xxviii. 16)—Vulg. “*qui crediderit, non festinet,*” which means that, with suffering, there is reason to expect the fulfilment of that which one expects and believes.

Another thing that I would say to you is, that when you have less ground for confidence, then you ought to expect and trust the more, since you know that faith consists in things in which human prudence distrusts and despairs. In order to this, you will act thus: never set yourself to meditate upon things that may lead you to despair, but upon those which may lead you to hope and to trust. So long

does not affect me," for it does affect you, to the extent to which you believe. And know that in acting thus you will "*sanctify God in your heart,*" and when you sanctify Him, your disease will leave you.

Recall to your memory all the other promises of God that correspond with this, and you will from time to time refresh your memory with them; and, associated with them, you will reflect upon what God has done for those who have been His, and who have depended upon Him, feeling certain that He will do the same for you. And when your imagination shall seek to lead you aside, hold it to this, strongly and firmly, and say to it, "It is not possible that my God shall leave me any length of time. It is not possible that He will deny me His mercy or His pity. And it is impossible for Him not to fulfil to me that which He promises to those who believe in His promises; and since it is a fact that I do believe in them, and am relying upon them, He cannot fail me." Controlling yourself in this manner according to the counsel of St. Peter, in not disturbing yourself, nor terrifying yourself, in your sickness, whilst you sanctify God in your heart through it and in it, believe me, as thus I promise you it as from God, you will very soon be able to say with the prophet (in Psalm xciv. 19), "*According to the multitude of my griefs in my heart, Thy consolations shall cheer*

my soul ;” for it will come to pass that you will really and effectually experience what he experienced.

Finally, and by way of recapitulation of all this long letter, I warn you, that the devil, our mortal enemy, when he sees you in this sickness, will assault you ; he ordinarily does so with two weapons, striving to divert you from piety. In the first place, he will labour to divert you from your belief in the particular providence of God ; he will persuade you that this your sickness is fortuitous, brought about by some irregularity of yours, and that it is not by the providence of God. He will labour at this by all possible ways and means. Against his arts and lying arguments you will arm yourself with that letter which I recently wrote to you “ Upon the Providence of God,” and you will not allow yourself to be diverted from it by anything, for you would fall into impiety. Mind you note this well, though it should be fact that your sickness originated in some personal irregularity, it is likewise fact that God provided that you should fall into that irregularity, in order that by it you should fall into the sickness, for He intends to discipline you in it and by it. Here recall to memory all the statements there are in Holy Scripture affecting this particular providence of God ; remember the letter upon “ Disasters,” and that upon “ Temptations,” and look to it that you be not in any manner vanquished therein.

When the devil shall see that he cannot divert you from this particular providence of God, because you are strong and firm in believing, and in holding it to be certain that this sickness of yours came by the order of, and in the providence of God; then he will labour and strive to persuade you that God does not send it for your advantage, but that He will chastise you, in this world and in the other, for your sins and failings. Here be you strong and firm, recalling to memory that passage of St. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 32), "*But when we [Christians] are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world,*" and say: I know assuredly that God afflicts me for my benefit, and of this I have no doubt at all. Remember likewise that passage of St. Paul (Rom. viii. 28), "*All things work together for good to them that love God,*" and say: I love God, and if not as much as I ought, at least as much as He gives me grace to love Him, and therefore this sickness is for my benefit. Herein stand, herein persevere. And when it shall appear to you that you find the least cause in yourself to hope for this beneficent result in your sickness, then let your confidence and your hope be more assured than ever.

With these two weapons you will be frequently assaulted, at one time with the one, and at another time with the other. So manage as never to be unprepared with these defensive weapons wherewith to

repel the offensive. And should you at any time, through want of preparation, find yourself wounded by one of them, be not dismayed ; do not yield as vanquished ; on the contrary, resuming, through greater strength of mind, your self-possession, avail yourself of your defensive arms, and God will help you. And rest assured that had you not believed, had you not confided, and had you not loved, you would not have been assaulted with these weapons, nor would you have felt the conflict with them ; but because you believe, confide, and love, on that account are you thus assaulted. Watch and pray, that you be not conquered.

And recollect that he is not held to be valiant, who, because he never fights, is never conquered ; but that he is so, who fights and conquers. And for this reason Scripture states (James i. 12) that the man, who is blessed is not the man who is never tempted, but that he is so, who endureth temptation. And know that if you are patient in this sickness, you suffer temptation, since it is with sickness that God purposes to tempt you in order to see how you feel in relation to His particular providence, and how strongly and firmly you stand in it, and how well affected you are in your convictions relative to the love He bears you, in having given His only-begotten Son as a remedy for your sins.

Suffer, then, patiently this sickness with which

God tempts you ; labour not to be diverted a point from piety ; and hold it to be certain, that God, having brought this trial upon you, will give you that crown of eternal life which He has promised to those who, because they love Him, are never diverted from piety. This shall be so through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

VII.

*WITH WHAT INTENT ONE SHOULD GO TO THE
MOST HOLY COMMUNION.*

You should approach the Holy Communion with *the intention* of reviving in your memory the death of Christ ; wherein God executed the rigour of His justice upon that most innocent flesh for all the acts of wickedness and rebellion, for all the vices and sins of impious, rebellious, vicious, and sinful flesh. You should go *certified* in your mind that you have in that execution as great a part as you would have anticipated had all that rigour of justice been executed upon yourself, and that you had lived with all the innocence in which Christ lived ; thinking thus :

God has already executed the rigour of His justice, and being as He is just, it is clear that He will not seek to execute it twice, so that I can be certain and assured of justification, of resurrection, and of eternal life as mine. You should *consider* that in going to the communion, you go to proclaim by an outward token that you are *just* and holy; I mean to say, that you have the intention and that you have the bliss-conferring certainty, which makes you *just* and holy; just, for that you believe; and holy, for that you are *dedicated* to God. When you shall go to the Holy Communion with *this intention*, with *this certainty*, and with *this consideration*, you will have the proof; and they that do not go thus, do not examine themselves, and they go unworthily, deceiving those who see them, and they are really those "*who do not discern the Lord's body*" (1 Cor. xi. 29), forasmuch as they go without this intention, without this certainty, and without this consideration.

Were a person to ask me, and to say: Supposing I find myself without this intention, without this certainty, and without this consideration, am I to be disassociated from the Holy Communion? I should answer him by saying: When thou shalt seek this intention in thyself, when thou shalt desire to have this inward certainty, when thou shalt enter upon this consideration, do not disassociate thyself, but rather commending thyself to God, supplicating Him

to supply what is wanting in thee, do thou draw near; and I feel assured that to the individual acting thus, God will increase his faith; he will come to be assured of his righteousness and of his holiness; and this from the mere goodness and mercy of God.

The Christian's Conception of Christ.¹

DESIRING inwardly to determine the conception which a Christian ought to have of Christ, I proceed to consider in Him two generations, the one divine and the other human : and two periods, the one of abasement and the other of glory.

With reference to His Divine generation, I know that Christ is the Word of God, the Son of God, of the same substance with the Father, one and the same with Him : so like Him that Christ could well say to Philip, as in John xiv. 9, "Philip, he that seeth me, seeth the Father also." I understand this person to be that Word, with which God created all things, even as Moses declares in Gen. i. 3, "God said, 'Let there be light ;'" and even as David says in Ps. xxxiii. 6, "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made." By this same Word I understand, that God upholds all things, conformably to that passage in John i. 4, "In Him was life ;" and to that in Heb. i. 3, "Upholding all

¹ Valdés refers to this conception of Christ in his Commentary upon St. Matthew's Gospel, in both the first and the last chapters. The Commentary was discovered in 1879 ; the Editor has translated it, and the manuscript is in the hands of his publishers.

things by the Word of His power." I understand this Word to be the same, whom, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, God clothed with flesh in the womb of the most holy Virgin, with the design of reinstating all things by Him, even as He created them all by Him, and upholds them all by Him; and I understand that this Word of God was, as Isaiah declares in chap. liii. 10, *prosperous in Christ*, inasmuch as that was accomplished which God purposed in Him and by Him: and thus I understand that He is one and the same Word of which St. John, in chap. i. 1, declares, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;*" and further, in verse 14, "*And the Word was made flesh;*" and with that of which St. Paul declares in Col. i. 16, "*For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and in earth.*"

But setting myself to investigate in what this divine generation of the Son of God, of the Word of God, consists; in what manner the Son is begotten of the Father; for what reason the Word is called the Son, and the Son is called the Word; I find myself so incapable of grasping this knowledge, that I am afresh confirmed in what I wrote in a Consideration (XCV.), declaring that just as the worms, which are engendered by the corruption of the earth, are wholly incapable of understanding the mode in which one man is generated by another, so men that are

begotten by carnal generation are wholly incapable of understanding, not only the mode in which the Son of God was begotten, but likewise the mode in which the sons of God are begotten by the Holy Spirit of God. And had I understood in what manner Moses and David, St. John and St. Paul, understood that God created all things by His Word, I should understand, moreover, this divine secret upon the investigation of which I am engaged; in which I proceed to consider the power with which Christ did whatever He pleased in the state of humiliation, being instantaneously obeyed by His creatures without being obstructed by any one of them, more than was permitted.

Should it please God to render me capable of understanding this divine secret before I quit this present life, I will add hereto what He shall teach me, to His glory and to that of Christ, and of those, who are the sons of God, in Christ and through Christ. Otherwise I shall content myself with this, that I am certain I shall see with these bodily eyes in the life eternal, what I now desire to see with the eyes of my mind: and in the meanwhile, I rejoice in what I know at present, that this Word of God is the Son of God; with whom and by whom God has created and restored all things; that He is of the same substance with the Father; that He is one and the same in essence with Him; and that, like

Him, He is eternal. I understand that the Holy Spirit, accommodating Himself to our incapacity, in speaking with us, employs words in use amongst us, such as these, "Word" and "Son,"—not that we can through them comprehend the divine secret, but in order that we may have some name for it. *With reference to this divine generation*, I understand that Christ is the first-born Son of God; by His eternity, that He ever has been Son, and that He is the only-begotten Son of God; by His individuality, that He alone is Son by generation, all others that are sons being so by regeneration. As regards this divine generation of Christ, I understand that there has not been in Him either decrease or increment: *He was the same prior to His incarnation, that He was at His incarnation, and that He is in glory.*

With reference to His human generation, I understand that Christ was, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, begotten in the womb of the most holy Virgin; but in what manner I do not know: it is sufficient for me to know that the flesh with which the Word of God clothed Himself in the world, was taken from that most holy Virgin, because, according to this flesh, I know Christ as the son of David and of Abraham; and I see already partly fulfilled in Him the promises of God, made to David as to the perpetuity of the kingdom in his seed, and to Abraham (Gen. xv. 5) as to the multiplication of

his seed, and as to his inheritance of the world (Gen. xxii. 17); and I expect to see them entirely fulfilled in the life eternal, when the resurrection of the just shall have been accomplished.

With reference to this human generation, I recognise in Christ two epochs—the *one of shame*, and the *other of glory*.

In the period of abasement, I recognise Him as a man passible and mortal, with all the miseries, which, being connected with passibility and mortality, are aggravated to the man who lives in poverty; and I recognise Him with a flesh similar to my own, excepting that His was not sinful flesh, nor flesh subject to sin, as mine. In this period I recognise Christ as very lowly and very meek, esteeming Himself to be what He was, in that mode of being in which He was, clad in flesh, as one disguised amongst men, in order that He might be treated as a man by men. I recognise Christ at this period as perfectly obedient to His eternal Father, perfectly free from all sin, and at the same time perfectly righteous and perfectly holy; so that He could safely say to those who persecuted and calumniated Him, as reported in John viii. 46, "*Which of you convinceth me of sin?*" and St. Paul might well say, speaking of Him, in 2 Cor. v. 21, "*He, who had known no sin;*" and St. Peter, in 1 Pet. ii. 22, "*Who did no sin, neither was guile found*

in His mouth." And the Holy Scriptures are everywhere replete with testimonies to this innocency of Christ, as a fact most necessary to be understood by all those, who recognise themselves as righteous in Him and through Him.

In the period of exaltation, I recognise Christ as man impassible and immortal, and I recognise Him as perfectly glorious and perfectly triumphant, as the person who has acquired absolute power in heaven and on earth, having, for God's elect, acquired the kingdom of God, and that they should be heirs of God: having slain them all in Himself, raised them all up in Himself, and glorified them all in Himself, so that their state comes to be identical with His. In this period, I recognise Christ as Lord, as Head, and as King of God's people, of God's Church, and of God's elect.

I recognise Christ as Lord of God's elect, because I understand that He has redeemed them with His precious blood, liberating them from sin, from hell, and from death, in which the first man (Adam) had placed them, and to which he held them obliged and subject; and because the Apostles, in their writings, exult in designating Christ as the Holy One.

I recognise Christ as Head of God's Church, because I understand, that God having placed His Holy Spirit in Him, with all the treasures of His Godhead, He communicates and distributes them

most liberally to those, who, being incorporated into Him, belong to God's Church; to every individual according to his capacity: acting upon them as my head does upon my body, to such an extent, that just as my hand, if it could speak, would declare and affirm that it feels that a vital power descends to it from my head, by means of which it lives: so every individual of those, who, incorporated into Christ, constitute the Church of God, because endowed with the faculty of speech, declares and affirms, that he experiences a spiritual power imparted to him by Christ, by means of which he lives a spiritual life. St. John understood this when he declared (chap. i. 16), "*And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace ;*" and St. Paul, in Col. i. 19, understood it so, where he says, "*It pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell.*"

I recognise Christ as King of God's people, because I understand that it is He, who rules and governs them by His Spirit, not only in things internal and divine as Head, but likewise as God; and in things external and corporeal, as King: in all which things, being, as they are, sons of God, "*they are led by the Spirit of God ;*" as St. Paul says in Rom. viii. 14. And thus I understand, that the kingdom of God is not called a spiritual kingdom, because it governs us in things spiritual, but because, governing us in things spiritual and corporeal, it does not govern

us with an outward law, but with an inward law, which is the government of the Holy Spirit, the Christian spirit. The Holy Scriptures constantly refer to this kingdom of Christ—(Isa. v. 1 *et seq.*; Micah v. 4; Dan. vii. 9)—from which passages I understand that God reigns in this present life, but by Christ; and that in the life eternal God will reign, but by Himself, for then He will be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 28).

In this manner I recognise Christ glorious as King amongst God's people, as Head over God's Church, and as Lord over God's elect; and I recognise Christ as lowly, perfectly innocent, and free from all sin, and abounding in every form of righteousness; and I recognise the promises made by God to Abraham and to David, as partially fulfilled in Him; and I recognise Him as the first-begotten and the only-begotten Son of God; and I recognise that He is the Word of God, by which God created all things; and I recognise Him as eternal and consubstantial. And I hold for certain, that just in proportion as the Christian faith shall become more effectual in me, both in modifying and in quickening me, will these recognitions of Christ go on to become clearer and more distinct, by which I shall advance, day by day, in an ever-increasing knowledge of God, to as much as may be known in this life: in the meanwhile, this flesh, being passible and mortal, is not a material able

to support the vision of Christ and of God, face to face (1 Cor. xiii. 12), as I shall see Him in the life eternal.

Having thus determined the conception I ought to hold as to Christ, I proceed to determine *the conception I ought to hold of those, who are members of Christ*, considering each one of them severally as a son of God, not a first-begotten one like Christ, who ever has been Son, but as an adopted son, through Christ and in Christ; not an only-begotten son as Christ, who is Son by generation, but regenerated through Christ and in Christ; born a Son of wrath, but by the new birth a son of God: not in a state of glorification, such as that in which Christ is, but in a state of abasement, such as that in which Christ was: not lord over God's elect, but one of their number, who, being elected of God, are servants of Christ, redeemed and bought by Christ: not the head of God's Church, as Christ, but as a member of the Church of God, of which Christ is the Head; not king of God's people, as Christ, but governed by the Spirit of Christ, by the aid of whose Spirit I know that all the members of Christ are united amongst themselves, and united with Christ Himself, and in the meanwhile united likewise with God, they being in God and God being in them. And thus I see that prayer fulfilled which Christ made to the Father for this union (John xvii. 11), saying, "*And*

that they may be one in us," &c.; and I understand how all Christian perfection consists in this union.

I pray God that He may impress it in such a manner upon my memory, that it may not seem to leave it or to depart from it for one moment; in order that I may never do anything that may be unworthy of this union, which I recognise as instituted by my Christ, who is my *Lord*, my *Head*, and my *King*; to whom be glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Tract

UPON THE MODE OF

TEACHING THE FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

BEING THE FIRST OF THE FIVE TRACTS (I CINQUE
TRATATELLI EVANGELICI) PRINTED AT ROME,
A.D. 1545, ENTITLED IN THE RECENTLY DIS-
COVERED MS. (THE SPANISH ORIGINAL), "ON
CHRISTIAN PENITENCE, CHRISTIAN FAITH, AND
CHRISTIAN LIVING."

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On the Mode to be observed in Teaching and Preaching the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion.

HAD it devolved upon me to regulate the form and manner in which the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ should be preached to all men, so that neither the carnal should be made licentious and worldly, nor that the superstitious (who would have it believed that they are spiritual) should be scandalised, and that God's elect and the children of God should be comforted and bear fruit, I should prescribe the observance of the following order.

In the first place, inasmuch as he only takes

medicine who knows himself to be sick and desires to recover health, and is persuaded that he cannot do so without medicine ; and because, by how much the more he feels his sickness, so much the more does he desire health ; and by how much the more he is persuaded that through medicine he may recover it, he proceeds with greater deliberation to take it ; I should prescribe that the Christian preacher, before he propound the gospel, should show men their depravity—that which is natural through Adam's transgression, with their own peculiar depravities which they have acquired through their personal transgressions ; on account of all which, as enemies of God, children of wrath and accursed, they are condemned to eternal punishment, and remain subject to sin and to death ; quoting for confirmation of this some authorities from Holy Scripture. Like that in Psalm li. 5, "*In sin did my mother conceive me ;*" and that in Rom. v. 10, "*If when we were enemies ;*" and that in Eph. ii. 3, "*We were by nature children of wrath ;*" with that which St. Paul says in Rom. v. 18, "*As by one offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation.*" Here I should prescribe that the evil of this enmity to God should be demonstrated, together with the danger of this slavery and subjection to sin and to death, in order that men might better know their malady and should the more desire to be restored to health.

Afterwards I would prescribe that it should be told them that this natural infirmity is incurable, as every one experiences in himself, from the impossibility which he finds in himself, even when he wishes to bring himself back, to live conformably to the will of God, to hold himself to be the friend of God, he continuing to love God. And here I would prescribe in confirmation of this, that certain authorities of Holy Scripture should be cited, from which it should appear that this is so, that a man cannot of himself alone so justify himself before God, as to hold himself to be cured of his disease, and secured as against the judgment of God, when indeed but a mere man, by departing from all evil, and by devoting himself to everything that is good; even should he come to live in all the innocence, holiness, and righteousness ever attained by all the men, who have lived in the world, in holiness, innocence, and righteousness, all taken together. And to confirm this, sufficient authority would be adduced, were that of Isaiah lxiv. 6 quoted—“*But we are all as an unclean thing, our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*”—wherein all the righteousnesses of men are condemned as filthy and abominable before God. Quote, likewise, Job iv. 18, where it is said that *God charges even His angels with folly*.

In this manner the Christian preacher would show men their sickness, and would move them to

desire health, and would enable them to receive this truth, that they cannot be cured, unless they take the medicine of the gospel. And this first part would be *Christian penitence [repentance]*, which consists in this, that a man know how bad his plight is, that he grieve at its being so, and that he desire to be delivered from it. This is that particular repentance which John the Baptist first preached (Matt. iii. 2, 8), and Christ subsequently (Matt. iv. 17). And Christ commanded that this should be preached, before the gospel and the remission of sins were so (Mark vi. 12); for, as has been stated, before a man will take medicine, he must needs first feel sick, and thereupon grief and a desire to be cured. But precisely as we understand that the sick man is not cured by being made conscious of his sickness, but by the medicine which he takes for the cure of it; so neither repentance, or the consciousness of his spiritual sickness, justifies the man, but the medicine, that is, the gospel, which he takes to cure it; so that repentance holds that relation to justification, which the consciousness of sickness holds to health.

Secondly, I should prescribe that the gospel should be preached in the very words in which, as shown by St. Paul, it was preached by the Apostles, where he states that it is an apostle's duty to go through the world as an ambassador from Christ, telling

men (2 Cor. v. 20), "*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him;*" as though they should say, On behalf of Christ, we beg you to hold yourselves as pardoned by God, as reconciled with God, as just, and as friends of God; and in order that you may know you may safely do it, know that Christ, who never knew what sin was, has been made sin by God. I do not say a sinner, but sin, laying upon Him all our sins, past and future, to mantle us in His righteousness. And here I should prescribe that the Christian minister should enlarge, proving that such is the truth, that men have no other medicine with which they can be cured of their malady, save only this, which is unique and most sufficient. And in confirmation of this, that declaration of St. Peter's in Acts iv. 12 might be quoted, where, speaking of Christ, he says, "*For there is no other (power, possanza, Italicè) name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*" (Acts iv. 12).

And forasmuch as it appears most strange to men that God should have pardoned them, should have reconciled them to Himself, justified and habilitated them for life eternal, nay, have made them heirs of it, without their having imported anything of their

own into it, I would here have these three things told them.

The first: that it ought not to appear strange to men that God justify them, without any personal merits of theirs, on account of Christ's obedience; since it does not appear strange that He should condemn them, without any personal fault of theirs, on account of Adam's disobedience, whence also they derived their acquired depravities.

The second: that our sins do not remain without their due chastisement, as much as is adequate to satisfy God's justice. For God has laid upon Jesus Christ all our sins, past and future; who recognised them all in Himself, and for all and each of them He felt Himself incriminated before God, as though He had really and effectively committed them all. And from having been duly chastised for them all, with all that rigour with which we all of us had to be chastised, had He not been chastised, it came to pass that He alone felt greater grief and greater torment in His Passion than all men taken together have felt as sufferers up to this very day. As appears from this, that He, having greater strength and firmness, wherewith to resist feeling and grief, than all men combined have had, and having greater cause for consolation of His feeling and grief, in the reflection that the highest good resulted to the human race from Him, which all redounded to the glory of

God, more than had all men combined together; He showed more infirmity and weakness in His Passion than any other man had ever shown, not only any one of those who suffered, recognising the will of God, the glory of God, and their own glory in their sufferings, as did the holy martyrs, but also than any one of those, who suffered without having this knowledge. And because this consideration, that *God has laid all our sins upon Christ, and that God has punished them all in Christ, greatly quiets the minds of men, by considering that, since God has chastised Christ, for that which He ought to have chastised them, being as He is just, He will not chastise them*, I should prescribe that this Christian truth should be confirmed with many authorities from Sacred Scriptures; as with the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, where Christ's Passion and the reason why He suffered are described with such precision, as well shows that the prophet in vision, clearly saw, all our sins upon Christ; and as at the end of the second chapter of the first Epistle of Peter (1 Pet. ii. 24), where he shows himself occupied with the same consideration as Isaiah, expressing himself almost in the same words as did Isaiah; and as likewise with all that is read in St. Paul (2 Cor. v. 18, 19), where he speaks of the reconciliation that Christ wrought between God and men, as that "*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not*

imputing their sins unto them." And above all, I would have those words quoted which Christ uttered, speaking of His blood, in Matt. xxvi. 28, "*It shall be shed for the pardon of the sins of many;*" with those in the last chapter of Mark xvi. 16, "*He that believeth,*" (meaning the gospel), "*and shall be baptized, shall be saved.*"

And the *third*: that the Christian preacher should enlarge, showing from Sacred Scripture the dignity, the majesty, and the divinity of Christ, telling in what mode He is the Son of God, consubstantial with the Father, that He is King over God's people and Head over God's Church, in order that men, reflecting who He is that has been chastised for their sins, may the more easily be brought to hold themselves to be pardoned, to be reconciled with God, and to be the friends and children of God, and to be heirs of eternal life, which is promised through faith and through baptism to them, who believe in the gospel, and who are baptized, and who approve of their having been baptized.

These three things having been told, and so confirmed that men, when inspired to believe in the gospel, might be capable of understanding them, I would have these four things told, the better to clear up these three:—

The first: that it being God's purpose to restore to man his being, his estate, and his dignity, which he lost through the first man's disobedience, and

knowing that to effect this it was necessary that men should love Him, and seeing that love is precluded by man's individual consciousness that his offences have made him the enemy of God, for, as is commonly said,¹ "*The offender never pardons,*" and never pardoning can never love: by chastising all our sins in Christ, He has made us a general pardon, in order that the hindrance to love being removed, man no longer holding God to be an enemy, but (I will say so) a friend, we should no longer abhor Him as an enemy, but love Him as a friend, and that we should serve Him lovingly, and thus come to recover our being, our estate, and our dignity (which we lost, partially in this life), entirely and perfectly in the other. And it is to be understood that we enter into enjoyment of this rehabilitation through faith and through baptism, and that, increasing in faith, we become perfect in Christian life, and go on in continuous enjoyment until the life eternal.

The second: that God, in chastising all our sins in Christ, was not less intent upon giving us assurance, than in giving satisfaction to Himself and to His justice, it being His purpose that we, severally seeing the blood of Christ shed for our sins, each one might rest assured that his are already pardoned; and being assured, might, as pardoned, begin to love, not in order

¹ See Consideration XXIV. of Valdés' CX. Divine Considerations translated and published by the Editor.

that he might be pardoned, but because he is pardoned.

The third : that whenever the gospel is named, the good and happy news of the remission of sins and of reconciliation with God through Christ's Passion is to be understood.

The fourth : that whenever Christian faith is named, the acceptance of this gospel, of this divine benefit, that Christ by the will of God has wrought for us, is to be understood ; when the acceptance is through divine revelation. So that it is to be understood that that man has Christian faith, who is inwardly and outwardly convinced that all his sins have been chastised in Christ, who holds himself to be pardoned, to be reconciled with God, to be a friend of God, and a child of God ; and as a child, heir of life eternal, and thus just and holy before God, neither for his own righteousness', nor for his own holiness', sake, but through the righteousness and holiness of Christ, who, by incorporating us into Himself, has justified and sanctified us ; which justification and sanctification we all enjoy, who believe that this is so, and show that we believe it by devoting ourselves to live as just and holy ; not to become just and holy, but because we are just and holy ; the just and holy life being the effect of the righteousness and holiness which Christ communicates to us. Just as the effect of fire is to warm and to give light,

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which warms and gives light not that it may become fire, but because it is fire; just as a good tree bears good fruit, not that it may become a good tree, but because it is a good tree. It is indeed true that as fire is known to be fire because it gives light and warmth, and as the good tree is known to be good because it gives good fruit, so the man that is just and holy in Christ is known to be just and holy for that his life is just and holy, giving, as saith the Scripture in Luke i. 74, 75, by his [life of] holiness and righteousness, evidence of his holiness and righteousness. And thus I understand, when St. John says (1 John iii. 7), "*He that doeth righteousness is righteous,*" that he does not mean that the man is righteous because he lives righteously, but that he lives righteously because he is righteous. As I also understand when he says (1 John ii. 29), "*Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him,*" he means that he, who is a child of God, lives righteously.

And because from great experience I know how incapable the human intellect is to seize the point in which this divine benefit consists, and how readily it escapes apprehension, even by us who are inspired to believe, I would have the Christian preacher set it forth in this simile.¹ Stating that God has done that with us which a king did with his vassals, who, as rebels, had fled from his kingdom; for that just as

¹ See Consideration XIII. of Valdés' CX. Divine Considerations.

the king being desirous of bringing his vassals back into his kingdom, issued forth a general pardon, and caused it to be proclaimed, in order that, being brought to the knowledge of all, all might return to the kingdom; so God, being desirous to bring us all back into His kingdom, from which as rebels we had all fled into exile, has issued forth a general pardon for us, chastising us all in Christ; and having made it, has caused it to be proclaimed, in order that, being brought to the knowledge of all, we all may return to our kingdom, taking possession of it in this life, and continuing in it to life eternal. And stating that we do with God what the vassals did with their king; for that just as many of the vassals, not crediting the general pardon, did not confide in their king, and thus did not return to the kingdom; and because they did not return, did not, through their unbelief and distrust, enjoy the general pardon; for they only enjoy such pardon, who believed in it and trusted in their king—they returned to the kingdom, where what they had lost through rebellion was restored to them; so it is with many men, who not crediting the general pardon which is intimated to them in the gospel: they not confiding themselves to God, have not returned, and not returning, they, through their unbelief and distrust, do not enjoy the general pardon; for they only enjoy it, who believed in and confided themselves to God; they enter into

the kingdom of God, they accept the grace of the gospel ; they devote themselves to live a Christian life, whence that, which they had lost through rebellion, is restored to them, partly in the present life, and wholly and perfectly in the life eternal.

Here I would prescribe that the preacher should state these six things :—

The first : that just as one of the restored vassals, when asked, “For what reason has thy king pardoned thee?” will not allege services, nor will he say ; “He has pardoned me because I, holding a favourable opinion of him, gave credit to his pardon and confided myself to him,” but he will say ; “My king has pardoned me of his mere goodness, generosity, and mercy,” and he will add ; “I enjoy this pardon because I believed and do believe,” attributing all the glory to his king, without attributing any part to himself ; so again, when one of those men who have entered into possession of the kingdom of God, was asked, “For what reason has thy God pardoned thee?” he will not allege services nor merits of any kind, nor will he even say ; “He has pardoned me because that I, holding a favourable opinion of Him, gave credit to His pardon, and confided myself to Him,” but he will say ; “My God has pardoned me of His mere goodness, generosity, and mercy,” and he will add ; “I enjoy this pardon because I believed and do believe,” attributing all

the glory to his God, without attributing any part to himself.

The second : that just as the exiled vassals, who through want of confidence in the king do not return to the kingdom, offend their king most gravely, whilst they who return to the kingdom cause him the greatest satisfaction, because that his purpose is accomplished in the latter, and is not so in the former; so the men, who do not enter into the kingdom of God, by accepting the gospel, through want of confidence in God, offend God in the highest degree, whilst they who enter into it give Him cause for the greatest satisfaction; because in the latter the divine purpose is accomplished, whilst in the former it appears to be frustrated. Therefore it is to be understood that the greatest of all sins is unbelief and distrust of the gospel, and that the greatest of all services is faith and trust in the gospel. But none believe in the gospel save those, who, by accepting the grace of the gospel, have entered into the kingdom of God, holding themselves to be pardoned by God, to be reconciled to God, to be His friends and children, and to be just and holy before God.

The third thing is: that there is in the restored vassal a particular moral excellence in trusting to his king's pardon, and in his confiding in him; but in the man, who stands possessed of the king-

dom of God, there is no particular moral excellence in accepting the gospel and in confiding in God, but it is the gift of God. Wherefore all they, who hear the preaching of the gospel ought to be admonished, that, if they desire to come out of the kingdom of the world and to enter into possession of the kingdom of God, holding it to be certain that the faith, with which one enters, is the gift of God; they should ask it of God in confidence, earnestness, and perseverance, assured that the faith, which springs from man's report or from the Scriptures, will never plant them in the kingdom of God, this result being reserved to the faith which is by divine revelation, conformably to that passage in Matt. xvi. 17, "*Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for man hath not revealed this to thee, but my Heavenly Father,*" &c.

The fourth: although in the services, which the restored vassals render to their king, being in the kingdom, they may aim at their own personal interests, besides showing themselves grateful for benefits received, because, although they love their king, they love themselves more than the king; in the services which the men, who are in the kingdom of God, render to God, there is never any aim at personal interest, knowing that Christ has gained all that for them, which they could aim at gaining for themselves, they only expressing gratitude for the benefit received, since, although they love them-

selves, they love God more than themselves, and thus, having forgotten their interests, they are only intent upon the glory of God, for they work inspired to work by the Holy Spirit, which is ever intent upon the glory of God. It is indeed true, that just as amongst the restored vassals, that one, who, in showing himself more grateful to his king, serves him more and better, is much better treated by his king; so amongst the men, who have entered into the kingdom of God, he, who, showing himself more grateful to God, serves Him more and better, is much better treated by God, conformably with the divine promises that are in the Gospels.

The fifth: that what Holy Scripture states as to God's rewarding our works, spiritual and material, has to be referred to this better treatment, so that justification and glorification are through faith, and the better treatment, as well in this life as in the other, is for works; not for all, but for those which are the fruits of faith, for these alone please God. Therefore, as St. Paul says in Heb. ii. 6, "*Without faith it is impossible to please God.*" For he who does not believe in the gospel, who does not hold himself to be pardoned by God, does not love God, and, not loving God, he does not work out of love to God, but for his personal interests. He does not work because he is righteous, but in order that he

may become righteous, and his works are not pleasing to God.

The sixth: that what St. Paul says, that faith is accounted to us for righteousness, is not to be understood as God's rewarding our faith in justifying us; but that God looks upon us, who believe in the gospel, for our faith's sake, as though we had always lived righteously and holily, contemplating us not in what we are of ourselves, but in that in which we are through Christ. Just like the vassals of the king, so should we say, that the faith, by which, in giving credit to the general pardon, they entered into the kingdom, is accounted to them for loyalty, their king looking upon them as though they had always been loyal.

Thus let this truth ever stand steadfast, firm, and constant, that God, in chastising all our sins in Christ, has pardoned us the past and the future; and that we all enjoy this pardon who believe in it.

THIRD: because the preaching of this divine benefit of Christ is wont to cause these three effects in those who hear it:—*The first*, that in the worldly and the carnal, when they believe from opinion (speculation), it makes them vicious and licentious; faith not being efficient in them to make them change nature, they convert Christian liberty into fleshly license. *Investing themselves with the honoured name of Christian, which is already prized*

and esteemed in the world, they dishonour Christian life, which is despised and trampled on by the world; and these, whatever they may say, will never truthfully say that they have peace in their consciences: (Isa. xlviii. 22), "*There is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked.*" *The second:* that it offends and scandalises the superstitious and the ceremonious, for they, judging the minds of all other men by their own base, vile, and vulgar minds, persuade themselves that they, who accept this divine grace, slacken in doing good, nay, totally cease from it, and consequently from love and service to their neighbours. *The third:* that it plants God's elect in the kingdom of God; it edifies and perfects those who have entered; for they, considering the benefit of Christ, feel themselves under such obligation to God for it, that they would not on any account, nor for anything, disunite themselves from the will of God. I would that immediately after the medicine of the gospel had been given to men to cure them of their spiritual malady, which, through the preaching of repentance, they know to be in them, they should be taught Christian life, in which are comprised Christian habits and Christian works; for they, who live Christianly, imitate Christ in those things in which He desires to be imitated: in meekness and lowliness of mind, agreeably with that passage in Matt. xi. 29, "*Learn of me, for I am*

meek and lowly of mind ;” and in true love, agreeably with that in John xv. 12, “ *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.*” And here I would have it stated, that because the peculiar effect of Christian faith, that which is inspired and revealed, is Christian regeneration, by which the man changes his nature, which change is shown externally by external renovation in everything ; for the regenerated man in Christ changes friendships, associations, books, and studies, extinguishing every form of worldly ambition of self-esteem ; and of all manner of bodily delectation and personal satisfaction :—no one ought to persuade himself that he has Christian faith until he begins to feel this Christian regeneration in himself, by this change of nature ; neither ought any one to be held to be a true Christian until that he begin to give signs of his Christian faith and Christian regeneration, by his renovation in everything ; commencing with the relinquishment of everything bearing the image of Adam, and the assumption of all that bear the image of Christ.

In this manner the gospel might be preached without throwing the worldly and the carnal into licentiousness, and without scandalising the ceremonious and the superstitious ; and thus God’s elect would not be defrauded of the benefit of Christ, nor of Christian improvement ; nay, thus it would come

to pass that the elect of God would be greatly consoled themselves and improved, whilst the superstitious would be ashamed of their superstitions, when they compared them with the works of true Christians; and the worldly would bridle their affections and appetites, in order not to show that their faith is not Christian but human, and therefore that it is not faith but opinion (mere teaching).

And in order that this doctrine might be of greater efficacy, I would have those excommunicated and cast out of the Christian Church, after having been admonished once, twice, or thrice, according to Christ's command, viz., the miserly, the ambitious, the blasphemous, the gluttonous, and the sensual; and them, who live in hatreds and wranglings, in carousals; in vanity; and them, who addict themselves to ill-earned money and to illicit games; them, who attend to vain ceremonies and to superstitious observances, attributing to creatures, to times, and to words, that which is not natural to them, and which neither Holy Scripture nor Christian Church attributes to them. For I understand that these are not less injurious to the Christian faith, bringing reproach upon it by their worldly habits and vicious superstitions, than the others are to Christian life, bringing reproach upon it by their worldly and vicious habits. And when this were thus done, I am certain that we should see in our own times a Christian

Church very like that which was seen in Apostolic times; and in that, we should see the portrayed resemblance of the mode of existence in the life eternal. For at least, were it permitted to true Christians to live Christianly, they would not have to hide up as they do;¹ at one time through fear of the superstitious, in order that they should not be treated by them as they treated Christ; and at other times lest dishonoured, they should incur the ridicule of the vicious; and not hiding themselves up, it would be truly something divine to see the mode in which, having changed their nature by the acceptance of this divine grace, having laid aside the vile, base, and vulgar minds which they had as children of Adam, and having resumed generous, distinguished, and brave minds, such as become the children of God, they live righteously because they are righteous, they live holily because they are holy, and they live as the children of God (because they are the children of God).² By which adoption they recognise themselves as lovingly obliged to much greater perfection of life, of manners, and of action, than all written laws, and natural law super-added, could impose. From this loving obligation it arises, that they are ashamed of themselves when they find themselves overtaken in anything contrary

¹ From fear of persecution—of the Inquisition.

² "Because they are the children of God;" these words are not found in the Spanish original, but they are in the Italian version.

to, or beyond, what they owe as children of God. And thus it is that, although they do not fear to be expelled on that account from the possession which they have in the kingdom of God, knowing for a certainty that as they gained it by faith, so they cannot lose it, I will say so, save by unbelief that should disunite them from the Christian faith; nevertheless they disquiet themselves, and are as discontented at the recognition of their own weakness and infirmity, as is an officer grieved and discontented, who, having done something unworthy of an officer, although he needs not fear that he will be cashiered, nevertheless blushes at his disgraceful conduct, or his want of spirit. And here I would have it shown how it is that the most imperfect of all those, who have Christian faith, is more perfect in his life and actions than the most perfect of those that have human faith; this effect being peculiar to Christian regeneration, in which the man ceases to be the child of Adam and becoming the child of God, he lives like a child, he acts like a child, and he serves like a child in holiness and righteousness, being holy and righteous not only before God through the righteousness and holiness of Christ, but even before men by his own personal righteousness and holiness; led by which he eschews all evil and cleaves to all that is good; so that he can say with Christ to men of the world, and to saints of the world, "*Which of you convinceth me of sin?*" (John viii. 4-6). On which perfection they keep their eyes

fixed, who know themselves to be the children of God in Christ.

And that they might not despair, holding themselves to be alienated from Christ, even they, who should have been expelled from the Christian Church, either for their profane and worldly, vicious and licentious life, or for their having given themselves up to superstitions and ceremonies, illicit and unbecoming to Christians; I would have Christian preachers show in what way this kingdom of God, this Christian Church, where they live Christianly, is very like to a very beautiful and very magnificent palace, situate in a public square. That just as there are some men, who, although they feel pleasure in looking upon the outside of the palace, have not spirit enough to prompt them to enter it, lest they should lose their conversation with those who frequent the public walk; whilst there are others, who but come up to the porch, and dare not go further, lest they should lose sight of the public square; whilst there are others, who, advancing as far as the entrance-hall, want spirit to go through the rooms, for they, considering the meanness of their station, fear lest they should be turned out of the palace; and then, again, there are others who, being spirited and stout-hearted, will go and see even the things which the noble owner keeps under lock and key, disregarding their humble condition, but regarding the high station of the owner of the palace, who built it and enriched it, in order that

it might be seen, prized, and esteemed; just so there are some men, who, although they take pleasure in looking upon the outside of this divine palace of Christian life, have not spirit enough to prompt them to enter it, lest they should deprive themselves of worldly gratifications; and there are others, who, daring partly to enter, do not dare to enter it wholly, in order not totally to divest themselves of their affections and of their appetites; whilst there are others who, daring to enter, without stripping off their appetites and affections, they, considering their imperfection, stop and halt in the Christian career; but again there are others, who, being spirited, stout-hearted, and valiant, and never stopping in the Christian career, strive to get as far as is possible, disregarding their own imperfection, but regarding the greatness of God and the perfection of Christ, in whom they know themselves to be perfect, although they know themselves to be imperfect in themselves. I would have all this thus stated, that no one might despair; considering that even they are not aliens to the divine palace, they, who stand outside looking upon it; for God is able to make them enter it, just as He is also able to make those who have entered it but a little, that they enter it farther; and that those who have entered farther, enter more and more. So that there be not a man amongst those who have faith, although it be human, that needs hold himself to be an alien from the Christian Church, whilst he shall

delight in looking upon Christian life, although he be without its pale: provided that he study not to give a bad name to the Christian faith, bringing reproach upon it by his superstitious and ceremonious life; and not to give a bad name to Christian life, bringing reproach upon it, by his profane and worldly, vicious and licentious, life; and provided that he be intent upon divesting himself of every sort of superstition, praying to God continually to give him Christian faith, and that He, day by day, increase it in him; and to lay aside all his affections and appetites, ever praying God to send him His Holy Spirit, to burn up and extinguish in him all the remains of Adam, and thus give him the inward certainty that his faith is Christian, and make him so that he may outwardly show by his Christian life that this is so. And he that shall follow this instruction, devoting all his powers, moral and physical, to that end, if he have not entered into this divine palace, let him know that he assuredly will do so; and that if he have entered, let him know that he assuredly will enter, as far as it is possible to go. For as our Lord Jesus Christ says in Matt. xi. 12, "*The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and they who exercise violence upon themselves take it by force.*"

So that the sum total of Christian preaching consists in these three points:—

The first: that before justification by faith, re-

mission of sins, and reconciliation with God through Christ, be preached; *let repentance* (penitence) *be preached, which consists in this, that a man know himself to be sick, and that he desires to recover health, and that he know his inability to cure himself.*

The second: that it be declared, that they recover from their sickness, who accept the grace of the gospel; by which acceptance they are holy and righteous, for they have the righteousness and holiness of Christ as their own, by their belief in the gospel.

The third: that it be taught, that by Christian life in imitation of Christ, the Christian give testimony to his Christian faith, by doing what Christ would do, and by not doing what Christ would not do; his Christian works being crowned by God, his Christian practices in this life being so with bodily and spiritual benefits, and in the life eternal with greater glorification.

And I hold it to be most certain, that when this order be held in preaching of the gospel, which I see was held by the Apostles, neither would the worldly become licentious, nor would the superstitious be scandalised, and God's elect might be comforted with the medicine of the gospel; whilst they, who are already the children of God, incorporated into our Lord Jesus Christ, might be improved and perfected. To Him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory and honour evermore. Amen.

Upon Justification by Faith without Works.

TO MY MOST WORTHY MASTER IN CHRIST,—

THE consideration of the various ways and of the numerous subtleties which human pride exerts in usurpation of the glory of God and of Christ, especially in things pertaining to our salvation, has always appeared to me to be marvellous; for human pride cannot endure that our salvation be attributed wholly and altogether to the mercy of God and to the merits of His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; but instructed by carnal prudence (wisdom), it, with certain coloured artifices of false piety, ever mingles therewith human works. But my astonishment increases so much the more, as I see that even they, who lovingly revere God and Christ, and are zealous of the glory of God and of Christ, are unable so to protect themselves from these fallacious artifices as not to remain deceived, not even they. Your letter causes me to say this, in which, you confessing that our salvation depends upon Jesus Christ, nevertheless will have it that our works are necessary to attain it; and the better to set forth this your opinion, you adduce the history of St. Paul, stating

that just as God gave to St. Paul the temporal life of all his companions, who would not have realised that gift unless they had remained in the ship, so God has given to Christ the eternal salvation of all those who believe in Him, but that they do not realise this gift, unless they do good works; and you conclude that, just as the remaining on board was the means of realising God's gift to St. Paul, so the doing of good works is the means of realising the gift which God has made to Jesus Christ of our eternal salvation. I, my Lord, leaving the decision of this matter to better judgments than my own, will tell you frankly what I judge to be true, and worthy of the glory of God and of Christ.

In the first place, it appears to me that this your opinion greatly prejudices the proud, ignorant of themselves, and the humble, who know themselves. The former are prejudiced, in that it gives them great cause for glorying in themselves, if the gift of eternal life is attainable through our works. The latter are prejudiced, for it gives them great cause to live in perpetual servile fear, nay, in perpetual despair. Because, by how much the more humble they are, and by how much the more they know themselves, so much the more clearly do they see, that were God to regard the quality of their works, they would be rather conducive to damnation than to salvation.

And if you will thoroughly examine this your proposition, you will in the upshot find that it does not admit that justification by faith is adequate to our salvation, without the instrumentality of the righteousness of the law,—a thing so blamed and so confuted by St. Paul in Romans iv. 14, "*For if they who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: for the law worketh wrath.*" Again, if Christ have fulfilled all righteousness, and has fulfilled it, not for Himself, but for me, why will you persuade me that the righteousness of my works is necessary to the attainment of my salvation? As if the righteousness of Christ's works, which becomes mine by faith, were inadequate to bring me to bliss. Again, if it is true that Christ has satisfied for all my sins, and gives me His satisfaction, why shall it not be true that God accepts me as righteous without any consideration of my works? But if God holds me to be righteous without my works, why will you persuade me that I shall not attain to the glory of the righteous without the aid of my works? Assuredly, my dear Brother, we should have but little cause for rejoicing that God, for Christ's sake, hath given us eternal life, if we be unable to realise the mighty gift without the aid of our works. But herein appears the superlatively stupendous and infinite mercy of our God, who, seeing that our works cannot aid us to attain

such felicity, has given us His only-begotten Son, with all His merits and with all His works and with all His righteousnesses. Now if all the merits of Christ, all the works of Christ, and all the righteousnesses of Christ are mine, why shall I wish to be so ungrateful to the glory of God and of Christ as not to believe, and loudly to confess, that these most divine and most efficacious appliances are more than sufficient to save me, without my going about to mix up the imperfection of my works with them? I, for my part, hope that God will ever vouchsafe me sufficient light, to preserve me from thus outraging my Lord. He has wrought for me; He has achieved merits for me; He is my soul's bridegroom, and consequently puts all His riches in common with her; He is the beginning, the middle, and the end of my salvation. I do not desire to save myself, save by the aid of my Christ's works, which are all mine, unless I reject them by infidelity and ingratitude: and even were I able to save myself by the aid of my works, I should never be so proud and so mad as to prefer my works to those of my Christ; that are not less mine than my own, and that are infinitely more pleasing to God than my own. But not to weary you with words, I conclude by stating, that it appears to me that we ought on no account to say that the instrumentality of our works is necessary to realise the life eternal which God has given

to those who believe in Christ, because this opinion increases pride in the proud, who are self-ignorant, whilst it takes away spiritual joy and peace of conscience from the humble, who know themselves; and it usurps part of that glory which we ought to give entire to our God and to our Christ. How much better would it be, therefore, to accommodate St. Paul's history in this manner: That just as God gave temporal life to the companions of St. Paul, out of love for St. Paul, but with the condition that no one should leave the ship; so the same God, for the love of Christ, gave eternal life to all who were to believe in Christ, but with the condition that Christ should, in His most holy life, work out all their good works for them, and in His most holy death should work out satisfaction for all their bad works; so that they, having been not only chastised for all their sins in Christ, but having, moreover, wrought most excellent and most perfect works in Christ, may attain to the glory of the life eternal solely by the merits of Christ.

Finally, I say, that we, being incorporated by faith into Christ, are made one with Christ. God no longer considers us for that which we are in ourselves, but for that which we are in Christ; and in Christ we are righteous and holy, because Christ is righteous and holy; and on account of this righteousness and holiness of Christ, which becomes ours by faith, God

gives us eternal life, without any regard whatever to our works. So that faith is the means of attaining the gift of eternal life, and not works.

And if any one, moved by human prudence, should say that this opinion makes man lukewarm and extinguishes zeal for good works; he shall be answered by saying, that if man, ceasing from the hope and aim of gain, ceases from working that which is good, he manifestly shows that he wrought from self-love and not from the love of God, and that consequently his works were perhaps good in the eyes of men, but that indeed they were not good before God. So that this our opinion does not prejudice men of this stamp, but helps them in the highest degree, by discovering to them their sickness, and consequently making it curable. Again, I say that there is nothing more powerful to inflame our soul with love divine, than to consider and to believe it to be the gift of God,—that Christ is the sole beginning, the sole middle, and the sole end of our salvation; the soul that burns with divine love cannot be lukewarm; nor can the fire of love extinguish the zeal of good works, but it may well set it on fire, preserve and augment it, as it ever does fire it, preserve and augment it; so that we ought not to apprehend that this most holy truth, which exalts the benefit of Christ and depresses human pride, will render the Christian lukewarm and extinguish

zeal for good works. Nay, I hold it to be most certain that, whilst a man does not embrace this truth, holding himself secure and certain of his salvation in Christ and through Christ, without any consideration of his own works, he will never be able to do any work uncontaminated by self-love and self-interest. Thus then, brother, let us pray to God with all earnestness that He give us Christian faith, for that, I promise you, will make us ready for Christian work; and whilst we are not ready for Christian work, let us know for certain that we have not Christian faith, which ever works by love; so that as I wrote in another of my papers, Zeal for good works is as inseparable from true faith, as light is inseparable from true flame. And to prove this truth, it suffices to know that the spirit of Christ, through true faith, dwells in the heart; and whoever has the spirit of Christ loves God and Christ, and is attent with all zeal upon the imitation of Christ; not indeed with the purpose of its being the means of eternal salvation, but only to become a member in unison with his Head, to preserve the decorum of the children of God, and to glorify God and Christ in his body and in his spirit.

And because the primary glory, which it is our duty to render to God and to Christ, is that we recognise our salvation to be wholly and altogether, and without any exception, from God and from

Christ; I exhort and beg of you, my most worthy brother in Christ, that you do violence to your prudence, bringing the intellect into subjection to faith, and renouncing every righteousness of your own, and every work of your own (spiritual and material), inward and outward; not wishing for other aid than Jesus Christ, to attain the gift that God has made on your behalf to Jesus Christ, who has wrought for you, has died for you, and has risen again for you; and, finally, will make you conformable to His glorious image. To Him be glory for ever. Amen.

A Second Tract upon Justification by Faith without Works.

THEY who oppose righteousness by faith, not admitting that it is in itself adequate to justification, are wont principally to quote the authority of St. James, who appears openly to declare that faith without works does not justify. To explain this difficulty, I will expose the nature of true faith and of false faith, and what St. Paul says of true faith, and of the mode in which it justifies; and of these things I shall speak briefly, because elsewhere they have been fully treated and confirmed by testimony of Holy Scripture.

I say, then, that *false faith is a persuasion that man has of Christ, wholly founded upon the report of men*, which believes the history of Christ as it does that of Cæsar or of Pompey; but does not know Christ according to the Spirit, nor does it know the benefit of Christ, and consequently it has no part in Christ, nor does it participate of the Spirit of Christ, without which a man can neither know God nor love God. Hence it proceeds, that the great majority of those, who have this false faith

live licentiously, confessing Christ with their lips but denying Him in their actions; while some of them, hearing it said that faith suffices for salvation, when they are rebuked for their sinful life, are wont to defend themselves by saying: that faith saves everybody. But let them commend faith as much as they will, their conscience always rebukes them, and certifies them that their bad life will be chastised with eternal punishment.

True faith is a persuasion that we have of Christ, wrought in our soul by the Holy Spirit, which certifies that Jesus Christ is very man and very God: that He has satisfied with His own most precious blood for all our sins, past and future; and that consequently He has liberated us from the curse of the law and from eternal death; reconciling us to His Eternal Father, and converting us from children of wrath into children of grace, and heirs of eternal life. This faith pacifies the conscience, mortifies the flesh, quickens the spirit, and inflames the heart with the love of God and of our neighbour; and thus re-establishes in us the image of God, which we lost through the first man's disobedience.

By this short discourse, that is clearly shown to be true which we have stated, which is, that there are two kinds of faith, the one of which we may call faith that is taught, the other faith inspired. *The*

former, as has been stated, is founded upon the mere report of men and of books,—such is the faith of Turks and of false Christians; *the latter* is founded upon the report and persuasion of the Spirit of God,—such is the faith of true Christians. *The former* may well deceive man, by persuading him that he believes, but it cannot indeed work it, that he confide entirely in Christ; *the latter* not only persuades man of the truth of the gospel, but it makes him place all his trust for salvation in the blood of Christ, and he firmly holds himself to be a child of God and to be predestinated unto life eternal in Christ and through Christ. *The former*, as it is fabricated in the soul of man by the authority of men, so it is easily ruined and prostrated by the authority of men, who persuade to the contrary as the worldly-wise commonly do; *the latter*, being wrought in our soul by the divine power of the Holy Spirit, easily resists all the assaults of malignant spirits, and all the assaults of human prudence, standing ever firm and immovable, so that neither the authority of men, nor the gates of hell, can shake it. *The former*, with the authority of the gospel, believes many things that are false and superstitious; *the latter* discerns all the opinions that are repugnant to the truth of the gospel, and refutes them as false and superstitious. *The former*, because it is a dead faith, never waxes, whilst in trials it wanes; *the latter*,

because it is a living faith, goes on constantly increasing, and the more that it is tempted, the more does it increase, like the faith of the Canaanitish woman. *The former* dwells only in the imagination, and is a faith wholly human, sterile, and that does not produce any fruit that can confirm and strengthen it; *the latter* dwells in the heart, and is a faith wholly divine, fertile, and that produces effects so stupendous and efficacious, that the man endowed with it, by lively and continuous experience, is confirmed and strengthened in it to such a degree, that no created thing can separate him from it. But to be better understood, I will give an example. Before I knew the scholar Lampridius, had any one told me that he was most learned in the Greek tongue, I should easily have believed it: had another of equal or of greater authority come afterwards, who should have affirmed the contrary to me, I might easily have changed my opinion, because my authority was wholly founded upon the report of men; but after that I had conversed familiarly with him and known from experience that he perfectly understood the Greek tongue, no one would ever have persuaded me that he was ignorant of it. Similarly when man has known by experience the stupendous efficacy of true faith, he remains so certain of the truth of the gospel, that there is no force of human discourse so powerful, nor authority

of men so efficacious, as to be able to make him change his opinion. Because, if I, accepting the gospel, that is, the blissful news of general pardon, feel my conscience pacified, feel my carnal affections and appetites fail, without any effort or exercise upon my part, feel in love to God, to Christ and to eternal things, feel disenamoured of self and of worldly things, and feel in my soul so great a certainty of my salvation and of my glorification in Christ and through Christ, that I live in perpetual spiritual joy,—I say that feeling inwardly these and other most stupendous effects, which true faith produces, and knowing the truth of the gospel by such experiences, were there to come an angel from heaven to tell me that the faith which the gospel proclaims is not true, I should boldly cry out with St. Paul (Gal. i. 8), "*Let him be Anathema.*" True faith may therefore be deservedly compared to the grain of mustard seed, for prior to its being sown in our soul, it appears to be the smallest and most insignificant thing, but when it is sown by the Holy Spirit, it increases and produces such marvellous fruits, that we experimentally know, that there is nothing in this world more precious or more desirable, and hence the statement is true that **CHRISTIANITY DOES NOT CONSIST IN KNOWLEDGE BUT IN EXPERIENCE.**

St. Paul speaks frequently of this faith, and ever

affirms that it justifies of itself, as in Rom. x. 6-10, where, comparing the righteousness of the law with that of the gospel, he most manifestly shows that to righteousness by the law, the works, which the law commands, are necessary; whilst to the righteousness of the gospel, the faith which the gospel proclaims, suffices; and in the fourth chapter of the same epistle he says (ver. 4, 5), "*Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*" But the doctrine of St. Paul, God be thanked, stands forth in our time in such light that all they, who read those epistles, unless they be blinded by passion or by the devil, clearly see that according to this most divine theologian, faith justifies of itself without any aid of works.

Now let us state how faith justifies, because this knowledge most effectually confutes the error of those, who impugn *this most holy truth, which is the foundation of all Christian piety*. When it is said that faith justifies, it is not meant that it is the efficient cause of justification, or that it obtains justification by its own dignity and merit, but it does mean that God having chastised all the sins of the human race in His only-begotten Son, and having consequently made a general pardon to all the world, all they enjoy this reconciliation and this

pardon, who believe in it, and they trusting in the gospel, which publishes this blissful news, return to the kingdom of God, whence we were excluded by the first man's sin, and are happily ruled by the Spirit of God ; whilst on the other hand, they who do not believe in this reconciliation and in this pardon, or who disregard it, remain in exile under the tyranny of sin and of the devil. Therefore faith is the instrumental cause of justification, and therefore faith is said to justify, inasmuch as by it we enjoy the free remission of sins wrought by Christ, inasmuch as by it the righteousness of Christ and the merits of Christ become all our own ; inasmuch as by it we become members of Christ and partakers of the spirit of Christ, the spirit that gives sanctification, and consequently makes those holy who possess it. If therefore faith justifies us, by communicating to us the holiness and righteousness and merits of Christ, how dares any one to say, that faith does not suffice to make us righteous? As though the righteousness of Christ which becomes ours by faith, were not of itself adequate to justify us, unless we add thereto the filthy and menstruous righteousness of our own works.

But it is well to know, that, although true faith does not justify by works, nevertheless it is inseparable from zeal of good works, for just as true flame does not burn by light, nevertheless it is insepar-

able from light; so that just as that flame, which does not give light is not true flame, nor has the power to burn; so the faith that is not lighted up with good works is not true faith, nor has it the power to justify. And the reason is at hand: for by true faith the spirit of Christ dwells in our hearts, which moves us and inspires us to all those things to which it inspired Christ; to humility, to meekness, to obedience, to love.

In this short discourse we have stated: first, the difference between true faith and false faith; second, that St. Paul's doctrine affirms that true faith justifies of itself; third, that it must needs be true, since faith does justify us, and forasmuch as by it, the righteousness of Christ becomes ours; fourth, that true faith is inseparable from zeal of good works.

These foundations being laid, I say that, if we will state, that St. James means that faith of itself does not suffice for our justification, we shall likewise be constrained to state, that the doctrine of St. James is contrary to the doctrine of St. Paul, and that it obscures the glory of Jesus Christ, by not believing that His righteousness, which becomes ours by faith, is adequate to justify us without the help of our own works. And because it would be impious and most absurd to form such a judgment of the doctrine of this holy Apostle, it is necessary soundly to understand his words; and to understand

them soundly, we must needs consider the intention he had in this his discourse, which without doubt is this. There were in the primitive church many false Christians, who converted Christian liberty, which is wholly spiritual, into carnal license; and living licentiously, they pretended that they were to be saved by their false faith. St. James, therefore, to repress their wantonness, says (James ii. 14), "*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works?*" by which words he signifies, that the man who is barren of good works, may indeed say that he has true faith, but that in truth he has it not, because, as has been stated, true faith is inseparable from zeal of good works. Afterwards speaking of their false faith, he adds, "*Can faith save him?*" And that he speaks of false faith, is seen clearly from what follows, where he calls it "dead faith," and compares it with the faith of devils, and shows that true faith is known by works, saying (James ii. 18), "*Show me THY faith by THY works, and I will show thee THE faith by MY works;*" wishing to infer that true *faith works by love*, as St. Paul states in Gal. v. 13, 14;—"being fruitful in every good work" (Col. i. 10). St. James then adds (chap. ii. 20, 21), "*But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?*" There is no doubt whatever

that if we will have it, that what these words mean, is, that beyond faith, the offering of Isaac concurred in Abraham's justification, we shall make St. James to fall into those difficulties above stated, and besides that, one must needs say, that he contradicts Holy Scripture and that he quotes it against himself. Because it manifestly states that Abram was justified by faith, by belief in the promises of God. How then can it be true, that the offering of Isaac, which happened many years afterwards, concurred in his justification? Who does not see that the effect would have preceded its cause? Therefore, if we will avoid this absurdity, it must be confessed that St. James uses the word justification in another sense than that adopted by St. Paul, for according to St. Paul, to be justified means to be accepted of God as righteous, and in this passage from St. James, it means to manifest his righteousness and to be known as righteous, in which sense this word is used in the fifty-first Psalm, and in the tenth chapter of Luke, as though the Apostle should say: O vain man, who thinkest to save thyself by barren and lazy faith, wilt thou see that faith without works is not true faith, even as a corpse is not a true man? Tell me: is not Abraham our father a memorable example of faith? And has he not made the righteousness of his faith renowned and illustrious by works, offering his own son in sacrifice? Scripture, moreover,

celebrates the faith of Rahab. Now has she not approved her faith by works, in receiving the messengers, and sending them safely away, to the manifest peril of her own life? Behold! the purpose that St. James had in these words is to show, that they, who have true faith, that which justifies, demonstrate their righteousness by good works. And he in stating, "*You see therefore that man is justified by works, and not by faith only,*" means that man, desirous of acquiring the title of righteous, must have more than a barren and lazy faith; and that there is needed efficacious faith ready for work, which is the gift of God, and which makes us righteous and children of grace, by incorporating us into Jesus Christ, our Lord and head. To whom be glory everlastingly. Amen.

That Life Eternal is the Gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

IF we would not depart from the doctrine of Holy Scripture, we must firmly hold, that life eternal is not given for the merits of our works, but by the grace of God, who, as St. Paul shows, has from eternity elected us and predestinated us to bliss, of His mere mercy (Rom. ix. 16), and through faith, which is the gift of God, who makes us His children (Phil. i.) By which adoption we enter into possession of the kingdom of heaven (Rom. viii. 17), "*for if we are children of God, then are we also heirs.*" Therefore let them know, who, like slaves and mercenaries, aim to merit eternal glory by their works, that the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir, but that of the free-woman (Gal. iv. 30). The hand may be put upon the truth about this opinion, by comparison: if Adam's unrighteousness, without any work of ours, constituted us sinners, children of wrath and of condemnation (Rom. v. 18), much more the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which becomes ours by faith, constitutes us righteous, children of

grace and of eternal salvation. Of which thing Christ Himself wished to make us sure and certain, when He said to the thief, "*To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise,*" showing that faith of itself is sufficient for our salvation; which He frequently affirms in the Gospel of St. John, and amongst other instances in the sixth chapter, saying, "*This is the will of the Father, that whoever believes in the Son, have life eternal;*" and St. Paul in Rom. x. 9, writes that the righteousness by faith says, "*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*" But they, who will have it that works are deserving of life eternal, cite many passages of Holy Scripture in confirmation of their opinion, which declare that God will render to every one according to his works, and they call eternal life the compensation and remuneration of good works. To explain this difficulty, we ought chiefly to advert that Holy Scripture never adorns our works with this title "merits;" nay, the prophet teaches us in Psalm cxliii., "*Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.*" And our Lord in Luke xvii. 10, "*When ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.*" If, therefore, the perfect observance of the divine precepts does not merit with God the

title of merits, what shall we say of our works, which are ever impure, imperfect, and very far short of the observance suggested? For this reason Jesus Christ commands us in our prayers ever to say, “*Forgive us our debts.*” If, therefore, life eternal be given for the merits of our works, we may all be most certain that we shall never attain it, for the quality of our works never reaches such dignity. How much better is it, therefore, to confess with St. Paul and with St. Augustine, that life eternal is the gift of God, which He, for Christ’s merits, bestows on us. *Christ has freed us from the curse of the law* (Gal. iii.) and from condemnation, by becoming our righteousness and our sanctification, making us His members and partakers of His spirit (Rom. viii.) So that we can boldly say with St. Paul, “*We are dead with Christ*” (Rom. vi.), “*risen again with Christ*” (Col. iii.), “*and ascended into heaven with Christ*” (Eph. ii.), and through Christ, where “*our life is hid with Christ in God*” (Col. iii.)

This foundation being laid, it remains for us to see how those passages are to be understood, which state that God will render to every one according to his works, and which call the life eternal the reward and remuneration of good works. It is to be known, that God having accepted us as children, through faith in Jesus Christ, and by this adoption instituted us heirs from eternity of the life eternal, He con-

ducts us to this inheritance by the path of good works, which (Eph. ii.) "*He has prepared that we should walk in them,*" it being the right thing that the children of God should represent the righteousness and holiness of their Heavenly Father in their habits and practice, walking in the footsteps of their eldest brother Jesus Christ. There is not, therefore, whereof to marvel that the children of God, *by perseverance in doing well, seek glory and honour and immortality* (Rom. ii. 7), for they know that it is by the path of good works that one walks to the inheritance of glory and immortality which their Heavenly Father has prepared for them. And it is most true that they, who shall have done well, shall be raised to the life eternal; for the glory of the life eternal is destined for the inheritance of the children of God, who are ordinarily led to it by God in the way of good works. And it does not follow, that because life eternal is, as the gift of God, the inheritance of the children, that it should therefore be that of slaves and mercenaries; it may, with precedent from Holy Scripture, be called a premium, reward, and remuneration of good works, not indeed because the dignity of our works can merit such reward and make us creditors of the life eternal, but because God of His infinite mercy and liberality recompenses with this incomparable gift all the molestations, tribulations, and fatigues which

His children have endured in this world, in constantly following with their cross their crucified Captain, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as amongst us the inheritance remunerates the good conduct of the children, although it be given by adoption, so God remunerates the good life of His children, by the inheritance of life eternal, although He give it by adoption. Whence St. Paul in Col. iii. 20, in promising eternal glory to good works, calls it "*the reward of the inheritance,*" signifying what we have already stated, that is, that *although eternal glory remunerates good works, it is not therefore caused by them, but by the gratuitous adoption, which constitutes us heirs. Which thing, according to some learned doctors, Christ designed to teach us by the parable of the vineyard; in which parable, it is seen, that they, who did not fatigue themselves, received the same wages as were given to those, who had laboured the whole day; in order that we may understand, that although eternal life recompense good works, it is not given for their merits, but of the mere grace and gift of God.*

Here I add that all our good works are the gift of God, whose spirit works in us, since we are regenerated by faith, which regeneration is never so efficacious in this life, but that the flesh ever battles with the spirit, and ever blemishes the works, which He works in us. So that if God had regard to our

merits no soul would be saved ; but the bad works which our frailty commits, are not imputed to us, through the merits of Christ, who has wrought satisfaction for us with His own blood (Eph. i. 7) ; and our good works, though imperfect and blemished, are grateful to and accepted of God, and are by Him remunerated, because He considers us, not for that which we are in ourselves, but for what we are in Christ ; and in Christ we are righteous and holy, and His very dear children ; and Christ makes up for the imperfection of our works by His own perfection, which is communicated to us by incorporation with Him.

Therefore, for these reasons and for the others which have been stated above, we can with the highest truth conclude, that the life eternal is not given for the merits of our works, but by God's mercy, who from eternity, without any respect to our works, has elected us as children and predestinated us to the inheritance of life eternal in Christ and through Christ, and to it He ordinarily leads us by the way of good works, wherein it is right that the children of God should walk, in imitation of Jesus Christ, their head. To whom be glory. Amen.

Tract upon Christian Assurance,

UPON JUSTIFICATION AND GLORIFICATION.

IS IT BECOMING IN THE CHRISTIAN THAT HE SHOULD DOUBT AS TO WHETHER HE BE IN GRACE WITH GOD? AND WHETHER HE HAVE TO FEAR THE DAY OF JUDGMENT? AND WHETHER IT BE WELL TO BE ASSURED OF THE ONE? AND TO LOVE THE OTHER?

WHEN I considered the great anxiety that this uncertainty causes to many, but imperfect Christians, as to whether they have to rest assured that they are in the grace of God, or not, *and whilst I know that Christianity is well-nigh involved in the clearing up of this doubt*, I frequently occupied myself in the examination of the subject, so much did I desire to understand the truth concerning it; and finally, comparing what I have read in the Holy Scriptures, with what I have experienced in myself, and have known to be the experience of others, I am come to this decision: that they, who, being in doubt and fear, do not hold the doubt and fear to be imperfection,

but on the contrary counsel and teach it, condemning assurance and love, they do not know what the gospel is: whilst they, who, being in doubt and fear, hold the doubt and fear to be imperfection, and dissuade from it and condemn it, striving to attain assurance and love, praising them and approving of them, they know what the gospel is; but they have not yet attained to feel the entire force and efficacy of the gospel; for they, who know that the gospel is good tidings proclaimed to men, by which they are assured that God has pardoned] them everything, since He has chastised in Christ all our sins, past, present, and future, likewise know that they have not to doubt as to their abiding in grace with God, and they know that they have not to fear the day of judgment, and they hold doubt and fear to be weakness of faith, and they strive to assure themselves in the faith, desirous of attaining to assurance and love; which I understand them to have attained, who, together with the knowledge of what the gospel is, feel the force and efficacy of the gospel within themselves, by the peace which they find in their own consciences, and by the mortification of that which is from Adam, which they begin to feel in body and mind. They who hold it to be good to doubt and to fear, have the Jewish spirit, and they therefore confirm their doubting and their fearing with the Jewish (Old Testament) Scriptures. They, who hold

it to be bad to doubt and to fear, neither doubt nor fear ; they begin to have the Christian spirit, divesting themselves of the Jewish spirit ; these are terrified by the Jewish (the Old Testament) Scriptures, whilst they are comforted and animated by (the New Testament) by the Christian Scriptures, with the gospel of Christ. And they, who have wholly liberated themselves from doubts and fears, being certain that they abide and that they persevere in the grace of God, who love and desire the day of judgment, have a wholly Christian spirit ; and these understand that the Old Testament fear, that of the Hebrew Scriptures, does not affect them, who are Christians : and therefore they embrace the good and glad tidings of (the New Testament) of the Christian Scriptures, the gospel of Christ.

And knowing that all that which I have stated, is certain, and hoping that they, who do not know what the gospel is, may know it, and may begin to hold that to doubt and to fear is a bad thing ; and that they, who do not feel the efficacy of the gospel, may begin to feel it, aided to do so by my removing out of the way the obstruction of the Scriptures that are apparently contrary to this feeling : I say, that for these motives, it has appeared to me to be Christian duty to examine here briefly the authority of those passages of Holy Scripture, with which they, who doubt and fear, justify doubting and fearing ; and

the authority of the passages of those same Scriptures, with which certainty and love is justified by them, who are certain that they abide in the grace of God, and love and desire the day of judgment.

They who doubt and fear, quote in the first place many authorities that are in the Old Testament Scriptures, where fear is praised, like that in Prov. xxviii. 14, "*Happy is the man that feareth alway.*" But these authorities are not conclusive amongst Christians, for they are children, and as children are freed from every fear, as we shall hereafter see. And because amongst the authorities which they cite from the sacred scripture of the Old Testament they bravely make that of Eccles. ix. 1 their champion, viz., "*No man knows whether he be worthy of love or of hatred,*" I will not recede from what I have stated; Solomon, a Jew, cannot decide upon Christian worth and upon the faith of the gospel; I say from what appears in the Hebrew text, where there is nothing said of worthiness or unworthiness, that what Solomon understood in that passage, is this, that man, however wise and however righteous he may be, is so blind in his perception of the works of God, that he does not recognise in them either love or hatred, nor does he know with what God shows love, or with what God shows hatred, neither when He chastises, nor when He is kind and gracious: and that this is the right apprehension of Solomon's

words, appears from that which immediately follows, where Solomon shows that this ignorance and blindness proceeds from the circumstance that the wicked man is as prosperous as the good, and that the good man is as afflicted as the bad.

These same persons avail themselves of some New Testament authorities, wishing by them to make out that their doubts and fears are commendable. And thus they, in an offhand manner, quote that passage from St. Paul (1 Cor. iv. 4), "*I am not conscious of any fault, but I am not on this account righteous,*" and, acting in the most injurious manner to St. Paul, they wish by these words to show that he doubted and feared, disregarding many other passages by the same St. Paul, from which it most clearly appears that he was certain he was in the grace of God, that he had the Spirit of God ; and it is evident that he desired to depart and to be with Christ, for that he desired and loved the day of judgment ; and they never reflected that when St. Paul says, "*but I am not on this account righteous,*" that he is not speaking of the justification, through remission of sins and reconciliation with God, but of *that* which has personal glorification attached to it, as when a man, showing that he has fully discharged his duty in the office which he holds, seeks to justify himself. And in this sense St. Paul says that he did not justify himself, for, although he was not conscious

that he had failed in anything in the administration of the gospel, which had been laid upon him, he did not on that account affirm that he had never failed in anything, in order to justify himself thereupon and to glorify himself thereupon, for he knew that this judgment did not belong to him, but to Christ, by whom the administration had been delivered to him; just as it would ill become a steward to judge himself to be a perfect steward, such as his master would have him, for such judgment pertains to the master, who gave him this office. And that St. Paul exactly meant this, is manifest from what precedes and that which immediately follows. So that these words of St. Paul in nowise favour either doubts or fears. These self-same persons quote Matt. x. 28, "*But rather fear,*" but there is nothing in it to serve their purpose, for Christ is there speaking with His disciples, who were imperfect, and remained such until they received the Holy Spirit; He designs to free them from the fear of death of the body by imposing on them the fear of spiritual death; to free them from the fear of man by imposing on them the fear of God, not that they should always fear, but in order that they should pass from fear to love. That that is true, appears from the effect, which the Holy Spirit wrought upon them, in liberating them from all fear; I speak of that which springs from uncertainty. So that neither do these words of Christ favour doubts and

fears. These same cite that passage in the Virgin Mary's song of praise (Luke i. 50), "*From generation to generation upon them that fear Him,*" and they do not consider the time when these words were spoken, nor that they were spoken in Hebrew, in which language this word "*fear*" involves in it, respect, veneration, reverence, and adoration; and this same ought to be considered in all the other things, that are in the history of Christ and of the apostles, which are of a like nature. These people adduce that passage of St. Paul (Rom. xi. 20), "*Be not high-minded, but fear,*" but they do not consider that St. Paul held an arrogant and presumptuous spirit to be a much greater imperfection in a Christian than his being doubtful and timid; and that hence the Apostle tells him to doubt and to fear, that whilst imperfect, he is in danger of falling into arrogance and into presumption; and that such is the truth appears from this, that to those, whom St. Paul did not recognise as standing thus imperilled, he does not tell them to fear but that they should believe, and that they should confide, and that they should love. This same has to be taken into consideration in all the passages of this nature that are found in the Apostolic Scriptures, as for instance that of St. Paul in Phil. ii. 12, "*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;*" for they, who doubt and fear, confidently adduce such passages as

this, to confirm them in their doubts and fears, never weighing nor taking into consideration what St. Paul immediately adds, saying, "*for it is God who works in you both to will and to do*"—meaning: Although I tell you to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, I do not mean that you are to doubt about it, nor that you should fear to lose it; for, since the desire you have for it is the gift of God, so likewise is the gift of working it out, and of attaining it; but I mean that knowing yourselves and your evil habits, you should be attentive to divest yourselves of them, for they are contrary to Christ, and alien to Christians, with all that same solicitude as though you had, of and through yourselves, to work out your salvation; striving to comprehend the Christian perfection, in which you are comprehended through incorporation with Christ; as though the Emperor having adopted ten slaves as children; and that to teach them the habits of children they had been told upon the part of the Emperor, "Mind and carry out your adoption with fear and trembling," meaning, Be ever upon your guard, not directing your attention to become children, for you are that already; neither to preserve yourselves in adoption, for he who placed you, such as you are, in it, will preserve you in it; but to acquire the habits of children of the Emperor, to comprehend the dignity of children, in which you are compre-

hended, fearing the shame that impends over you, who are children, should you be seen to have servile and slavish habits.

Three things may be gathered from what has been stated: *the first*, that what the Jews state with relation to fear, does not affect Christians; *the second*, that fear in the Christian is an imperfection; and *the third*, that the fear, which becomes the Christian, is lest he be found with habits alien to Christ and to Christians.

Now let us see with what considerations the Christian should banish fear and doubt from his mind, whilst he attains the certainty that he is in the grace of God, and that he perseveres in it, both loving and desiring the day of judgment, as the day of his redemption, and of his entire, perfect, and overflowing happiness.

First, *with the voice of the gospel*, which states in Mark xvi. 16, "*He that believeth, and shall be baptized, shall be saved,*" understanding this to be most glorious and happy news, being, as it is an intimation of general pardon and forgiveness, which it has pleased God to make to all men, laying all their iniquities, all their rebellions and sins, upon His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; chastising Him for all that, for which they merited and ought to have been chastised themselves. With this first consideration, they, who believe the voice of the

gospel, are certain that God has pardoned their sins; that of slaves He has made them children, and of enemies, friends; and with this they are assured of their salvation, and therefore they do not doubt their standing and perseverance in the grace of God, nor do they fear the day of judgment—nay, they love and long for it. They who do not yield entire faith to this voice of the gospel, not believing these glad tidings as they ought to be believed, they doubt and they fear: and their doubts and fears are tolerable, if they are known to proceed from defective faith. But doubts and fears are intolerable in those, who doubt and fear, not having this knowledge, who approve and ratify doubting and fearing.

Here I state three things. *The first*, that it is impossible that they who fear and doubt should love God; since they are uncertain that they shall attain eternal life through Christ; on the contrary, from the very fact that they doubt and fear, they prove concerning themselves that they hate God, *for we always hate those whom we fear*. *The second*, that if it shall appear to any one that the man does but little, who believes in the gospel, and holds himself to be righteous and to be holy, through the justice of God carried out upon Christ, let him endeavour to bring himself to believe; and when he sees the difficulty there is in doing so, and when he sees that in order to believe, he must renounce all his own

natural light, and all his prudence and his reason, then he will know that he does a great deal ; although it is not he that does it, but God ; since faith is the gift of God. And *the third*, that as it is impossible for the rebel, who has received pardon, and who believes that he has received it, to fear that he has to be chastised for his rebellion ; so likewise it is impossible for the man, however great a sinner he may have been, if he believe in the gospel, to doubt of the grace of God, or to fear that he has to be chastised for his sins.

In order to attain personal assurance from this *sweet dulcet voice of the gospel*, they, who strive to liberate themselves from doubts and from fears, reflect upon that passage of St. Paul (2 Cor. v. 20, 21), "*We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God,*" together with that which follows, "*He who knew no sin, has been made sin for us ;*" understanding that St. Paul, in laying down that which the apostles had been instructed to state to men when they preached the gospel to them, says thus : We, upon the part of Christ, beg of you to hold yourselves reconciled to God, for God has chastised all our sins in Christ, and has laid all our sins upon Christ, in order to mantle us in Christ's righteousness. Going further, they consider the comparison which St. Paul makes between the good wrought by Christ, and the evil wrought by

Adam (Rom. v.), and they argue thus : *Since we believe that the evil wrought by Adam was effective to our condemnation, without our fault, why shall not we believe, that the benefit wrought by Christ is effective to save us from it, without our merits? And here the affront has to be considered which they put on Christ, who believe that Adam's sin without their fault is adequate to condemn them, whilst they do not believe that the benefit of Christ is adequate to save them, without their merits.* They consider, moreover, what happened to the fearful servant who hid his Lord's talent : and in order that that may not befall them, which befell him, they proceed to chase away all fear from them. They take to heart what Zachariah says in Luke i. 74, 75, "*that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness;*" they argue in this fashion : Since it is true that after Christ came, God wills to be served without fear in holiness and righteousness, what reason have we to live in fear? Here we must reflect that they, who live in fear, do not serve in holiness and righteousness, for they are neither holy nor righteous; for were they so, they would live without fear, or they would hold fear to be a bad thing; whilst they are holy and just, who accept the general pardon and forgiveness, which is published in the gospel. When they consider what Christ says to His disciples and

to all those who are His (Luke xii. 32), "*Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom,*" they say thus : If Christ tells me not to fear, why should I fear ? and if Christ tells me and assures me, that God, of His own good pleasure, will give me the kingdom, why should I doubt of my salvation ? Were my salvation in my own hands I might doubt, but since it is in the hands of God, who has predestinated me to life eternal, I have no cause to doubt and to fear.

Weighing what St. Paul says in Rom. viii. 15, "*for ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear ;*" and what he writes to the Galatians (chap. iv. 6), "*God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts ;*" and what he says in 2 Tim. i. 7, "*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love ;*" they, every one of them, speak thus : Since it is true that the spirit which God has given me, is not servile, as was that which He gave during the time of the law, which works fear ; but a childlike one, as it is fitting that it should be, which He gives in the time of the gospel, which begets love ; why should I live in fear, or be in doubt, of my salvation ? When they consider that passage (Luke ix. 55), "*Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of,*" they think thus : If Christ rebuked His disciples, because they wished to imitate Elijah in severity, telling them that the spirit which they had

was not like that of Elijah, why should we by doubts and fears give occasion for Christ to rebuke us for following the spirit of the law and not that of the gospel? Here the error has to be taken into deliberation, into which they fall, who think that they cannot err, when they imitate the saints under the law. When they consider what St. Peter states in 1 Peter ii. 9, "*You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people,*" they speak thus: If we are such as St. Peter here says that we are, a generation chosen of God, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and the peculiar people of God, of what have we to fear? of what have we to doubt? who is there to accuse us? who is there to condemn us? They combine with this, what St. Paul says in the eighth chapter of Romans, where he shows that those Christians can rest secure of their salvation who have God on their side, He having accepted them as righteous, and with Christ for their intercessor. When they consider that passage in Rom. xiv. 17, "*The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy,*" they argue after this manner: If it is true that the kingdom of God consists in righteousness, peace, and joy, for that they who are in it are righteous, have peace, and have joy, what cause have we, who, by acceptance of the gospel, have entered into the kingdom of God, by doubts and fears to deprive ourselves of the righteous-

ness, of the peace, and of the spiritual joy, which are peculiar to the kingdom of God? Here it must be taken into consideration that they who approve of doubts and fears, have not entered into the kingdom of God. By deliberation upon Phil. iv. 4, "*Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice ;*" and upon 2 Tim. iv. 8, "*Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing,*"—and this when combined with what Christ, speaking of the day of judgment, says in Luke xxi. 28, "*Look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh ;*" they say thus : If in the first place Christ, and then His Apostle St. Paul, comfort us with the day of judgment as the day of our glorification, why should we fear it? nay, why should we not love it and desire it? *Here we have to be reminded that the crown of righteousness, which involves life eternal, is not prepared for those, who doubt whether they are in grace with God, who fear the day of judgment ; but for those who, assured by the Gospel that they are in grace with God, love and long for the day of judgment.* When they meditate upon what St. John says (1 John iv. 18), "*that there is no fear in love, and that, he who fears, is not perfect in love,*" they wholly resolve to divest themselves of every fear, and to clothe and

fire themselves with the love that springs from the faith and credit that is given to the gospel, fully relying, as good servants, in the hope that Christ will raise them up again in glory and majesty; for they have no doubt whatever either of their resurrection or of their glorification. With these very considerations, and with many others that are found in New Testament scripture, will they, who, by God's grace, begin to hold doubts and fears to be alien to Christians, be able to liberate themselves from them, and will therewith be able to clothe themselves with the assurance that they are in grace with God, and to long for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to judgment.

Here I will add four things. *The first*: that they, who have this assurance, are they who do charitable works, being moved to work by the love which they bear to God; they who have neither this assurance nor this security, as they do not love God, so likewise they do nothing from love to God, and therefore their works cannot be pleasing to God, as are those of them, who work from love to God, being governed by the Spirit of God. *The second* is: that he who shall not, even with these considerations, be able to bring himself not to fear and to doubt, let him aid himself with continuous prayer, asking God to give him faith, and that He may increase it in him to such an extent as

may suffice for the acceptance of the gospel, which liberates from fears and from doubts, and that without any intermission of consideration and of prayer, he may ever strive to liberate himself from fear and from doubt. And *the third*: that, if they who say that man cannot in this life be assured that he is in grace with God, unless it be by revelation, understand that the revelation has to be palpable and external, they may, from what has been already stated, see that they deceive themselves; but if they understand that man cannot have this assurance, unless he have that faith which is revealed and inspired, they state a very important truth. For it is certain that inspired and revealed faith is that, which alone gives man peace of conscience with the conviction that proceeds from the Holy Spirit, assuring him, that he is in grace with God, that he is a child of God, and that he is heir of life eternal. *The fourth thing* is: that they who wish to attain assurance, who only contemplate themselves, and the strict morality of their lives, and their self-justifications, by how much the more they shall strive to assure themselves, so much the more will they remain doubtful and timid; whilst they, who, on the one hand, regard themselves, and on the other, regard Christ, though indeed to the extent in which they shall regard Christ, they shall be assured; to the extent in which they shall regard themselves, they

will doubt and they will fear. And, therefore, it behoves every one, who would liberate himself from doubts and fears, to look solely upon Christ crucified, risen and glorified; and listening to the voice of the gospel, he should know for certain that God does not consider him for what he is in himself, but for that which he is, being incorporated into Christ; holding firmly that as to God, he is in himself that which he is in Christ; he will hold as equally certain that he is dead with Christ upon the cross; that he is risen with Christ; that he is glorified with Christ; and in this manner he will be sure that he is, and that he perseveres in the grace of God; and he will love and he will long for that glorious day in which the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, will show Himself victorious and triumphant. To Him be glory for ever.

Praise be to God.

